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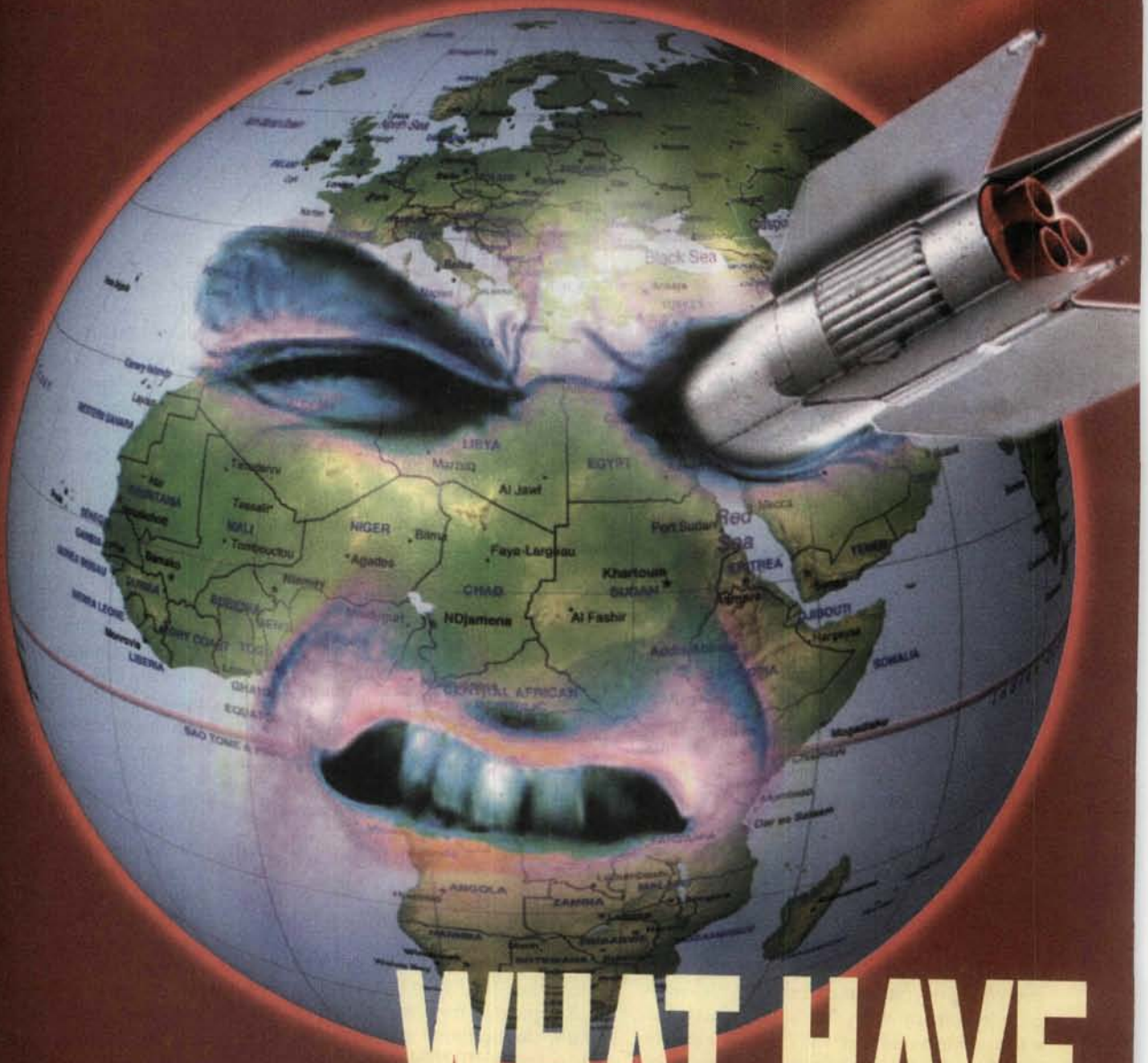

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

ONE YEAR AFTER THE INVASION OF IRAQ

THE EDITORS, SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
FRANCES FITZGERALD & JONATHAN SCHELL

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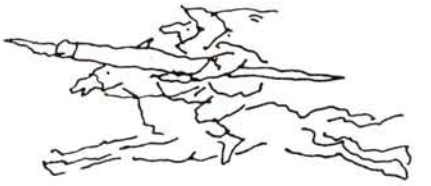

R.O. BLECHMAN

FOG OF WAR: NOT 'A REAL PASTING'

New York City

■ As one of the executive producers on *The Fog of War*, I was disappointed by Alexander Cockburn's essay on the film ["Beat the Devil," Feb. 9]. I'm a longtime admirer of Cockburn's work, and it gives me no joy to say that he has utterly missed the point of the film. Cockburn writes about the movie as if it unquestioningly accepts and endorses everything that Robert McNamara says, as if he's never heard of the terms "unreliable narrator" or "dramatic irony."

Filmmaker Errol Morris never set out to give McNamara "a real pasting" à la *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, but neither did he set out to let McNamara off the hook—as most thoughtful critics have registered, for example Ron Rosenbaum in the *New York Observer*. Contrary to Cockburn's assertion that Errol "didn't do enough homework," Errol has in fact read just about everything published on McNamara in English, as well as listened to many hours of White House tapes (some only recently declassified), reviewed scores of government documents and viewed reams of news footage. His intensive research turned up any number of surprising facts. It's true that no previous source has fully explored McNamara's role in the firebombing of Japan—but instead of dismissing the information, Cockburn may remember from his newspaper days that this is called a "scoop." Besides, does Cockburn think that McNamara is falsely claiming to have borne some of the responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians? This hardly seems like letting McNamara "get away with it."

Most contemporary movies—documentaries as well as narrative features—tend to spell everything out rather than expecting the audience to actually think. We always knew that some people would fault *The Fog of War* for not including other voices besides McNamara's, or for trusting the audience to draw its own conclusions about McNamara's life and actions. But I never would have guessed that Alexander Cockburn would be one of them. JACK LECHNER

Austin, Tex.

■ Alexander Cockburn is entitled to his view of Robert McNamara, but when he states that reports of Kennedy's intent to withdraw from Vietnam are "nonsense" he is misinformed. There was in fact a formal and unconditional presidential decision, taken in meetings on October 2 and 5, 1963, to withdraw 1,000 soldiers by the end of the year, and the rest of the training forces by the end of 1965. The best single source on this is Howard Jones's *Death of a Generation* (Oxford). I have written two articles on the topic, in *Boston Review* (October–November 2003) and a follow-up in *Salon* (November 22, 2003).

Cockburn appears to be relying on Noam Chomsky's 1993 attacks on earlier reports of this decision. But numerous confirming documents, including reports from the planning meetings, transcripts and tapes of the decision meetings and implementing memoranda, have since been released. Chomsky and I exchanged letters on this topic in the December–January *Boston Review*. JAMES K. GALBRAITH

Portland, Ore.

■ I appreciated Alexander Cockburn's critique of *The Fog of War* and will keep it in mind as I watch the film. Cockburn's charge that Errol Morris hasn't done adequate homework is troubling. Paul Hendrickson's *The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War* is a brilliant exposé by someone who clearly *has* done his homework. It deserves publicity now that Morris's movie is out. Regrettably, it did not receive the full attention it deserved upon its publication in 1996.

I recommend Hendrickson's book not only for its judicious and penetrating portrait of McNamara but for the author's ability to interweave such moving details from the lives of five victims of his decisions. Hendrickson's book joins the company of titles like C.D.B. Bryan's *Friendly Fire* and Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night*, which I refer to when my children ask me about the Vietnam period.

GEORGE T. KARNEZIS

COCKBURN REPLIES

Petrolia, Calif.

■ There's no need here to reiterate all my criticisms of *The Fog of War*. The full barrage, much expanded from my two pieces in *The Nation*, can be found at www.counterpunch.org/cockburn03012004.html. I hear that in the recent Oscar-giving, Morris thanked McNamara. Very cozy.

As for Galbraith: This business about the secret Kennedy decision to withdraw, now supposedly unearthed from long-buried archives, is pretty silly. First of all, the alleged plan was not secret but announced by press secretary Pierre Salinger, whose news release was printed in the *New York Times* on October 3, 1963, as a scheduled reduction that was no big deal, being the usual line that the United States would leave as soon as South Vietnam had the situation under control. Second, JFK's White House pulsed with platoons of the Best and the Brightest planning contradictory strategies: on the one hand the Peace Corps, on the other the Green Berets; on the one hand economic and social reform for Latin America, on the other military dictatorship and death squads; on the one hand rapprochement with Cuba, on the other a rifle sent to agent Am-Lash in Paris. You name it, they gamed it. McNamara had a phased-withdrawal plan in one pocket and in the other, in late JFK time, an escalating schedule of secret US attacks on the North, which did take place, which prompted the Tonkin Gulf provocation (about which McNamara is brazenly deceptive in the film), which ultimately led to the bombing of the North and huge expansion of the war. Actually, those 1,000 men did get withdrawn in late 1963, but as Howard Jones notes, it was mostly a matter of rotating personnel. I agree with Professor Fred Thayer, who worked in the Pentagon in the early 1960s under McNamara as an Air Force colonel; he recently wrote to me as follows:

"It takes a very simple analysis of international politics to understand that when the US supported a coup in South Vietnam (Kennedy may not have known of the final decision, but Lodge was his personal agent), and when that coup not only deposed Diem but killed him, that all bets were off. The reason JFK was 'shocked' (as McNamara says) may be because JFK knew that the killing of Diem erased all previous decisions, or merely that JFK was not up-to-date (common in the absence of decision processes in those years).

"Once Diem was killed during a coup we supported, all previous decisions became meaningless. My personal analysis is that the 'plan to withdraw' was merely a public relations ploy because forces in Vietnam increased 1,700% in the Kennedy years. Whatever JFK may have dreamed about in September/October, however, meant nothing after Diem was killed just a week or two before JFK was killed."

To offer a parallel, imagine those strategy memos in the Bush White House game-planning US troop reduction in favor of a UN force last fall. Then the UN envoy Vieira de Mello got blown up and all bets were off there too. Regime change is the thin end of a very long wedge. Maybe Bush still has a secret plan to withdraw from Iraq, while Kerry shouts for 40,000 more troops. ALEXANDER COCKBURN

LEARNING TO LOVE THE BOMB?

Washington, DC

■ Immanuel Wallerstein's "Soft Multilateralism" [Feb. 2] is a shrewd debunking of a golden era of US multilateralism. He is right that the United States must adjust and cooperate with a multipolar world. But he is terribly wrong that our government and its citizens should give

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Cover by Gene Case & Stephen Kling/Avenging Angels, based on the iconographic image by George Méliès in the early French fantasy film Voyage Dans la Lune, *1902; illustrations by R.O. Blechman, Caitlin Dover*

EDITORIALS

What Have We Done?

In the weeks leading up to the Iraq war, neoconservatives in and around the Bush Administration counseled the President against seeking a second United Nations Security Council resolution, arguing that the success of the war it was about to launch would provide legitimacy enough in the real world. Not only would the war remove a clear and present threat to US national security, it would also create irresistible pressure for democracy in the Arab world, pave the way for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, intimidate Iran and Syria into falling in line with Washington policy and strike another blow against terrorism in that part of the world. Thus impressed with the display of American power, critics at home and abroad would have no choice but to sign on to the strategy of remaking the Middle East.

One year later, these claims look more like fantasy than considered policy judgments. The war's legacy has turned out to be much closer to what the Administration's critics warned it would be: a costly and reckless abuse of American power that has badly damaged US security, destabilized the region and undercut America's position in the world.

The Administration's case for war rested principally on the notion that because Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and had possible ties to terrorist groups, it constituted a threat to our national security, which could not be entrusted to the UN. These claims, including the disparagement of the UN inspection process, have proven to be far off the mark, more the product of a propagandistic drive to war than a reasoned analysis of Iraq's military capabilities. As a result, one of the first casualties of the war has been America's reputation as a responsible power. How lasting the damage will be to US credibility is not clear. What *is* clear is that in lying about the Iraqi threat, the Administration diverted resources from other more urgent needs—from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the campaign against Al Qaeda—and in the process created an array of new security threats, including those that come with its role as an occupying power.

Notwithstanding the recent agreement on an interim Iraqi constitution (which left fundamental differences unresolved), the Administration still does not have a viable strategy for restoring sovereignty to the Iraqi people or for insuring their security, let alone for creating a stable democracy. For many ordinary Iraqis, their country is more dangerous (if also freer) than it was before the war, and the US occupation means not the beginning of a liberal democratic future but the likely prelude to either a Shiite-dominated Islamic government or to chaos and civil war. Whatever trust or confidence Iraqis had in the occupation was squandered early by the inability of US forces to restore law and order and by a reconstruction process that seemed geared more to awarding fat contracts to the Administration's friends than to restoring services or creating jobs for Iraqis.

Now the United States seems caught in a dilemma—if it makes a rapid exit, it will leave Iraq with increasing civil strife; but the longer it stays the more it will be the target of Iraqi anger. This is why the Administration and the Iraqis have turned to the UN to find a way out.

Security and democracy in the larger region have fared little better. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict grinds on, with Ariel Sharon and his allies in Israel even bolder in their plans to expropriate more Palestinian land in the West Bank. As long as Israeli settlers and troops are occupying Palestinian land, Washington's commitment to democracy will be seen as hypocritical. Elsewhere, in the short run, the principal beneficiaries of the war have been not liberal democrats but conservative mullahs and Islamic revolutionaries. In Iran the mullahs rigged recent elections; in Kuwait and Pakistan supporters of Osama bin Laden have gained electoral

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strength; in Riyadh, bombs are going off so frequently it calls into question the future of the Saudi regime. The Administration now talks about a generation-long commitment to democratic reform in the region, but its actions have undercut US legitimacy. Moreover, it is widely understood that Iraq is likely to absorb US resources and energy for years to come, leaving little in the way of constructive and practical support for true Arab reformers.

At the outset of the war, the Bush Administration saw itself as the future master of the greater Middle East. But instead it has exposed the limits of American power (and virtue) and has made US interests hostage to the most radical forces in the region. What is worse, it seems to have no idea how to deal with the complex forces it has unleashed with its occupation of Iraq—except to rail against the "terrorists" it helped create. A Shiite-dominated government in Iraq may be inevitable, but the Administration does not seem to have been prepared for the reaction of the Sunni minority or how events in Iraq might affect the delicate ethnic and tribal balance in neighboring countries like Saudi Arabia.

This Administration was repeatedly warned that war can have unintended consequences, and in this case it could set off civil wars in the region. And, by occupying a country in the Arab and Islamic heartland, the United States has assured the spread of bin Ladenism (even if bin Laden is captured). Securing greater US control over the world oil supply was an unstated goal of the war, but, ironically, by setting loose destabilizing forces, this Administration has brought the world closer to a full-blown energy crisis.

We can take some comfort from the fact that with US forces tied down in Iraq, the Administration is no longer able to pursue its reckless course of regime change and must now defer to Europe in dealing with Iran and, to a lesser degree, Syria. We can also take comfort from the fact that it has turned to the UN for help with the transfer of sovereignty and that the UN has been vindicated in its approach to disarming Iraq and offering a framework that could have avoided war in the first place. But this is small comfort compared with the great harm the Bush Administration has inflicted on the region and on US security. And certainly it is no comfort to the families of the many Americans and Iraqis who have paid the ultimate price in an illegal and unnecessary war.

COMMENT

Iraq and US Leadership

A year ago, the United States went to war, although Iraq was not an imminent threat and had no nuclear weapons, no persuasive link to Al Qaeda, no connection to the September 11 terrorist attacks and no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. In the months leading up to war, President George W. Bush failed to keep the fundamental bond of trust between the American people and the President by misusing the facts in the push toward war and depriving citizens of an honest debate on the wisdom of that war. The Bush Administration has broken faith with the American people, who expect their Presidents to give them all the facts—not just the convenient ones—as the nation decides on war.

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COMMENT

In few election years have voters faced a more important choice than in 2004. When they go to the polls in November, they will be offered not only competing candidates but also fundamentally differing visions of how, when and why America will send its sons and daughters into danger.

Aided and abetted by the Republican majority in Congress, President Bush imposed his agenda on America and the world. In its disrespect for the United Nations and the world community, the Administration squandered the immense good will that other nations extended to our country after the terrorist attacks and that continued strong throughout the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The debacle cannot all be blamed on flawed intelligence. Numerous specific warnings from the intelligence community were ignored as the Administration looked at the facts through ideological blinders rather than sound analysis. Greg Thielmann, a former senior State Department intelligence officer, placed most of the fault on "the way senior officials misused the information they were provided." He said, "They surveyed the data and picked out what they liked." What happened was not merely a failure of intelligence; it was the result of manipulation of intelligence and selective use of questionable intelligence to justify a decision already made. Saddam was an evil dictator, but he was not an imminent threat, and he was not connected to 9/11. David Kay's exhaustive postwar inspections leave little doubt that Saddam was not close to a nuclear capability and had no weapons of mass destruction at the time the war began.

President Bush and his advisers should have presented their case honestly, so that Congress and the American people could have engaged in the debate our democracy is owed, above all when the issue is war or peace. But Karl Rove convinced the White House that war could bring advantage in the 2002 Congressional elections, saying Republicans could "go to the country" on the war on terrorism.

Election politics trumped foreign policy and national security. As the campaign season entered its final stages, Administration officials appeared repeatedly in public making a case for a war unsupported by the facts. In late August, Vice President Cheney told Americans, "Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon." From the Rose Garden in October, President Bush called Iraq "a gathering threat to the security of America and to the future of peace" and said that the Iraqi regime was "a threat of unique urgency." Numerous other statements were orchestrated to alarm the public by emphasizing the danger of a nuclear Saddam and his ties to Al Qaeda, although the statements had no basis in fact.

The Administration insisted that Congress vote to authorize the war before it adjourned for the November elections, knowing that a debate on Iraq would distract voters' attention from the troubled economy and the troubled effort to capture Osama bin Laden. These scare tactics worked. Republicans in Congress voted almost unanimously for war and kept control of the House. Democrats were deeply divided and narrowly lost their majority in the Senate. A Republican White House now had solid control of both houses of Congress for the first time in half a century.

President Bush has no interest in continuing the debate. He recently appointed a commission to investigate the Iraq intelligence, but it is designed more to deflect accountability than to assign it. As the 2005 deadline for the commission's report makes clear, the Administration's highest priority is to minimize further debate before this year's election. The President has also asked the commission to address the wrong question: How prewar intelligence on weapons of mass destruction compares with what we are now finding in Iraq. That mandate misses the point. What's needed most is a full, fair and independent investigation not only of the intelligence itself but also of its use by the Administration to justify its decision to go to war. We need a commission that will make its findings and recommendations available to the public.

We all agree that the Iraqi people are safer with Saddam behind bars. But the Iraq war has not made America safer. It has made us more hated in the world, and it has made the war on terrorism harder to win. We knocked Al Qaeda down in Afghanistan, but we let it regroup while we went to war in Iraq. Eleven times in the two years after 9/11, Al Qaeda attacked Americans and other innocent civilians around the world. The war in Iraq has given Al Qaeda a new recruiting tool and strengthened those who support and encourage terrorists.

Al Qaeda and the Taliban fighters who support them are stepping up their attacks against military personnel and civilians in Afghanistan. The warlords are jeopardizing the stability of the country and earning large sums from the booming drug trade. Humanitarian assistance workers, once considered immune from violence, are targets of a new Afghan insurgency.

As another dangerous consequence of the war, the US Army is

CALVIN TRILLIN

On Whether the Martha Stewart Guilty Verdict Carries Implications for Those Involved in Prewar Intelligence Gathering

When federal authorities come by,
It's criminal if you concoct a lie.
The Feds don't think that lies are okey-dokey.
Will Chalabi, then, soon be in the pokey?
He plainly slipped the CIA some whoppers
Much larger than those Martha told the coppers.
Well, no, this liar won't be brought to book.
Although they knew their Ahmad was a crook,
His neoconnish sponsors wouldn't check
Those weapons legends that were plainly dreck.
One shrewd defense for him would work, it's clear:
"I only tell them what they want to hear."

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COMMENT

overextended. More than 500 of our servicemen and -women have been killed, and more than 3,000 have been wounded. By the end of 2004, eight of ten active Army divisions will have been deployed for a year or more in support of Afghanistan or Iraq. The Army is offering re-enlistment bonuses of up to $10,000 to soldiers in Iraq, but many are turning down both the money and the new tour of duty. Members of the National Guard and Reserves are kept on active duty and away from their families, jobs and communities for over a year. Politics is an ever-present driving force. According to a *New York Times* op-ed article by Lucian Truscott, a 1969 graduate of West Point reporting from Mosul in December, Army officers now feel that "every order they receive is delivered with next November's election in mind, so there is little doubt at and near the top about who is really being used for what over here."

We have paid a high price for the Administration's war of choice. We have paid with our credibility in the international community, with loss of life, with the individual tragedies of loved ones left behind in communities here at home and with billions of dollars that should have been spent on jobs or housing or healthcare or education or civil rights or the environment or a dozen other clear priorities.

When asked in December 2003 whether Saddam actually had weapons of mass destruction or whether there was only the possibility that he might acquire them, President Bush replied, "So what's the difference?" The difference is whether we go to war or not. America went to war in Iraq because the President insisted that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Saddam Hussein were too dangerous to ignore.

In Fact . . .

BUSH'S BRAINS

■ John Nichols writes: Bush/Cheney '04, the President's election campaign, is supposed to be the smartest, smoothest political operation since Reagan/Bush in 1984. But the campaign stumbled when it aired television ads that featured images of the dead being removed from Ground Zero. The Bush team knew it would take hits for branding the President as the 9/11 candidate but planned to dismiss the criticism as partisan carping. Instead, the Bush camp found itself doing damage control after families and friends of the dead said what too many Democrats have been afraid to say: that the President was exploiting tragedy for political gain. Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani was dispatched to describe the ads as tasteful, but he declined to say whether he would exploit images of the dead for political purposes—as most candidates in 2002 Congressional races avoided doing. The people who dressed Bush in a flight suit to declare the Iraq war "mission accomplished" have provided more evidence that national security issues—supposed to be Bush's most explosive weapons in this campaign—are more volatile than imagined.

OL' DOGGETT LEARNS NEW TRICKS

■ More from John Nichols: When House majority leader Tom DeLay gerrymandered Texas Congressional district lines, he had two goals: tip the partisan balance toward Republicans and get rid of Representative Lloyd Doggett. A DeLay ally suggested the redistricting might not be worth it if Doggett survived. Why the antipathy? Doggett is an old-school Texas liberal populist who opposed the Iraq war and DeLay's corporation-friendly tax schemes and wants to limit the Patriot Act. Doggett's as tough as DeLay and, it turns out, a little more politically savvy. After mapmakers sliced Doggett's Austin district into three parts, he didn't quit or switch parties. He leaped into a new district that snakes 350 miles south from central Texas to the Mexican border. Doggett studied Spanish, secured the support of the United Farm Workers Union and on March 9 won a tough Democratic primary to chants of "*Sí se puede*" from his new constituents. "Tom DeLay was determined to pit region against region, race against race, so that we would be distracted," yelled Doggett. Republican redistricting will likely yield several new GOP reps in November, but it looks like DeLay will still have to deal with Doggett.

PAUL SWEEZY

■ Paul Sweezy, who died recently at 93, was this country's best-known Marxist economist. The author and co-author of more than twenty books and 100 articles, he was the founder, with Leo Huberman, of *Monthly Review*, America's longest-running socialist publication. During the McCarthy era he was briefly jailed for refusing to name names to New Hampshire legislative inquisitors. Eventually, in a landmark victory for free speech, the US Supreme Court threw out his conviction. *Monthly Review* at one point shared offices with *The Nation*, to which Sweezy was a contributor. Doug Henwood of *Left Business Observer* told us he has much to say to today's left economic activists: "We badly need to revisit the territory that Sweezy explored so fruitfully—fundamental questions about the organization and scale of production, the nature of ownership, and the responsibility for the investment decisions that are presently made by a handful of self-interested moguls that nonetheless affect us all."

MARC MIRINGOFF

■ When Marc Miringoff died recently at 58, we lost a practical idealist whose work is only beginning to find the audience it deserves. Miringoff's Big Idea was to measure society according to the well-being of its citizens. His critique of the Index of Economic Indicators led to his Index of Social Health Indicators, which looked at issues ranging from children living in poverty to drunk driving. He compared the United States to Europe (we were not Number One), and compared the fifty states to one another (darkness, deep in the heart of Texas). A constructive progressive, Miringoff helped the Connecticut legislature to peg state funding to his data. He was in it to help people—especially poor people, especially children. He was also funny and kind, an unreconstructed '60s folkie who would break into a protest song in the middle of a scholarly lecture. He is already missed.

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COMMENT

War in Iraq was a war of choice, not a war of necessity. It was timed for political advantage, not the result of a serious decision honestly weighed by the President and his top advisers. There was no imminent threat, no national security imperative and no compelling reason for war.

In resorting to misguided ideology and distortions of the truth to take the nation to war, President Bush broke the basic bond of trust between government and the people. If Congress and the American people had known the whole truth, America would never have gone to war. The President deserves to be held accountable. We don't need a sign on the desk in the Oval Office that says, "The buck doesn't stop here anymore."

At our best, America is a great and generous country, ever looking forward, ever seeking a better nation for our people and a better world for peoples everywhere. I'm optimistic that these high ideals will be restored and revitalized by the American people in November. The election cannot come too soon.

EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Edward M. Kennedy is the senior US Senator from Massachusetts.

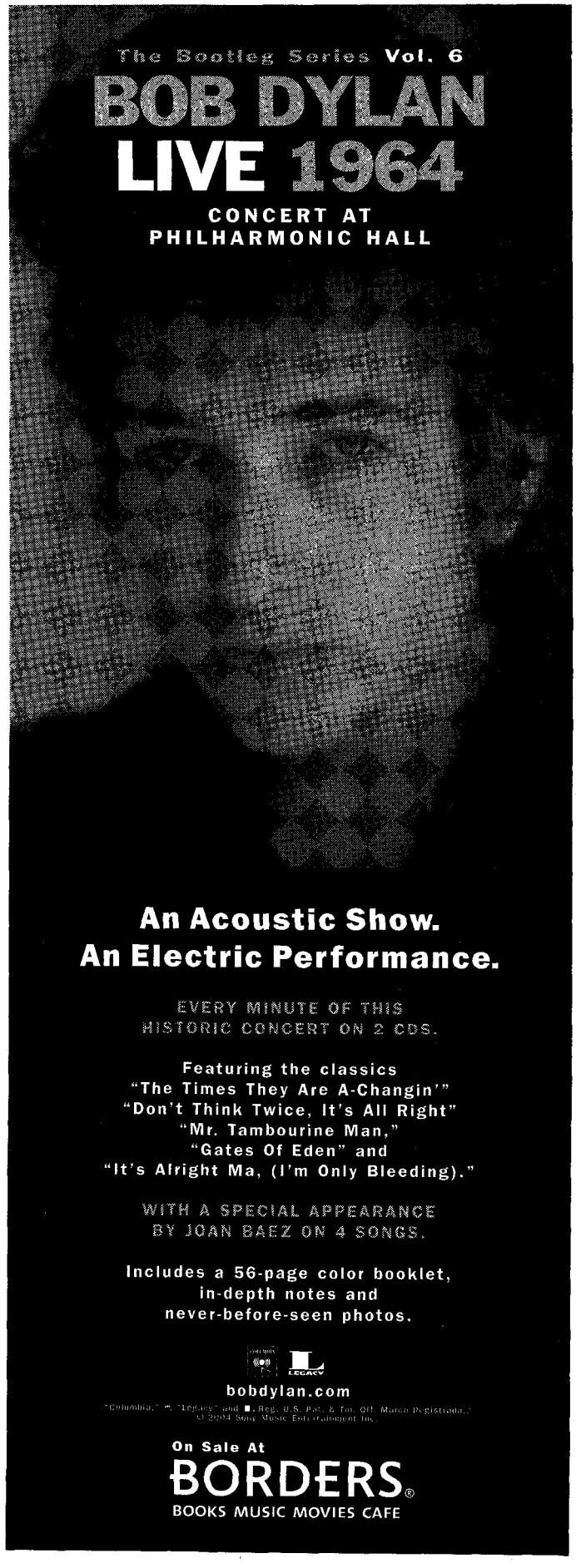
Klayman Watch

Did Larry Klayman, the conservative lawyer/provocateur who spent much of the 1990s suing Clinton-related targets via his Judicial Watch and accusing the Bill-and-Hillary crowd of vast corruptions, recently try to skirt campaign-finance law to obtain an illegal million-dollar boost for his back-of-the-pack US Senate campaign in Florida? Klayman is litigious. *Newsweek* reported in 1998 that he had even sued his mother during a family spat. So let's just lay out the facts, and readers can reach their own conclusions.

Some background: Klayman started Judicial Watch in 1994 and became famous—in a cable TV sort of way—by filing what seemed like thousands of lawsuits against Clintonites. His work (some might call it shenanigans) was partly underwritten by Richard Mellon Scaife, the right-wing millionaire. And Richard Viguerie, the direct-mail titan of the right, raised money for Judicial Watch. Klayman also represented the Miami relatives of Elián González in a lawsuit against the Justice Department, and he involved himself in the Florida recount mess. In recent years he expanded his hit list. Judicial Watch joined the Sierra Club in suing Vice President Cheney for records of Cheney's energy task force, and it launched a lawsuit against Cheney and Halliburton for alleged accounting fraud (a federal court dismissed the case). But Klayman also stuck to his bread and butter, representing Gennifer Flowers, who filed a suit claiming Hillary Clinton had tried to destroy her, and supporting a businessman charged with stock and bank fraud who claimed he secretly made illegal campaign contributions to Hillary Clinton.

On September 23, Klayman left Judicial Watch, which issued a terse three-sentence statement that could be read as a sign that the parting had not been amicable. That day, Klayman announced he was running for the US Senate from Florida and that he intended

(Continued on Page 24)



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Letter From Juárez

by Mariana Katzarova

Esther Chavez holds the weeping girl in her arms and chants the words, as if to convince herself that they are true: "It's really wonderful, my dear girl. You are alive. You could've been one of them." Esther looks over the girl's shoulder toward the row of pink crosses placed on the edge of a ditch, where eight raped and mutilated bodies of young girls, the same age as Rosaisela, the girl in Esther's arms, were dumped by their killers in 2001.

Rosaisela Lascano is only 16. She was attacked and raped on December 30 by a man who left her for dead in the desert. But she survived. Now she is pregnant with the baby from the rape. There, in the middle of a rubbish dump, once a cotton field, where the last windowless boxes of the maquiladoras meet open desert, Rosaisela whispers her story. Like thousands of others, she came from the poverty of the south to look for a better life in Ciudad Juárez with its 380 maquilas (US- and European-owned plants, using Mexico's cheap labor and paying young women less than $5 a day) built along the US border. Ciudad Juárez, a city of 1.3 million, lies just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas.

The man dragged Rosaisela by her hair, while hitting her all over her body. Then he raped her and left her for dead among the old tires and broken bottles. She crawled home many hours later, fearful for her life, avoiding people and houses. Her parents took her to the police the next day. The police were barely interested. The only one who offered to help Rosaisela was Esther Chavez—a beautiful, ever energetic and always elegant 70-year-old woman who established Casa Amiga about ten years ago as the first and only crisis center in Juárez to provide help to the victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

According to the authorities, some 370 young women have been found murdered since 1993, and a further seventy are still missing, although Mexican women's groups say the figure is over 400. Many victims were sexually assaulted, their bodies mutilated, strangled and dumped in the desert near Juárez. And not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice for these murders.

Three federal police agents wearing dark sunglasses and looking uncomfortable are standing near the eight crosses. They say their bosses ordered them to guard the ditch because they're afraid the same killers may come back and dump another body there.

It is Valentine's Day and a big protest march, organized by Eve Ensler and the V-Day movement and supported by Amnesty International, has brought between 5,000 and 7,000 people from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso to march through the streets of Juárez. They are demanding an end to the murders of women and girls. We all meet on the Lerdo Bridge, which connects the two cities, chanting "*Ni Una Más*" (not one more), "*No Están Solas*" (you are not alone) and screaming "*Justicia*" (justice), while carrying black balloons and makeshift placards. For the past several years Ensler has called Valentine's Day "V-Day" and used her award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues* to organize actions, raise funds and create awareness of antiviolence causes around the world. Ensler believes that one person with a vision and the conviction to stop violence in her community is enough. "We need to realize that the Earth is one body," she says, "and if we don't start seeing it as one body, we are all going to die. Because we are dependent on each part of this body to live. So when a woman in the south is beaten, I can't walk—my feet are being crushed. And when a woman in the north is raped, I can't think—my brain is being attacked."

So who is killing the poor young women and girls of Juárez? And why, after more than ten years, do the killings continue? Some of the murders are believed to be the work of serial killers or drug gangs, linked to the powerful Juárez drug cartel. Others link the murders to an organ-trafficking network. Still others say that the perpetrators come from among some 700 sex offenders who live in El Paso and often visit Juárez. Another theory is that a number of the mutilated bodies found in the desert bear the signs of snuff films, the type of violent porn films in which someone is really killed at the end. The inability of the local authorities to stop the murders has convinced many of possible police complicity in the crimes.

Oscar Maynez, a former chief of forensics for the Chihuahua state police, told me he quit two years ago when he found police planting evidence in one of the cases. In recent years, under increased public pressure, the authorities have been eager to show that the murders in Juárez have been solved. A series of arrests were made, but the murders continue. All the suspects detained by the police claim they were tortured to confess to the murders. "We all know that the state police work for the traffickers," said Maynez. "None of the people detained for the murders are responsible, in my opinion. The real murderers are people with no limits. I think they are a highly organized group with political connections and some connection to the police."

Juárez looks to me like the war zones I know—like Chechnya, Kosovo, Bosnia. There is the same casualization of violence, the same sense of despair, the same blurred line between right and wrong, the same wild packs of hungry street dogs roaming the city, the same sense of doom.

The maquilas are now moving out of Juárez, looking forward to even cheaper labor in China. In the meantime, under increased international pressure, President Vicente Fox has appointed two women to deal with the investigations and prosecutions in Juárez but has not yet given them funds, resources or trained staff. Mexican feminist Marcela Lagarde has invented a word for the situation in Juárez: femicide.

Somebody with resources, power and impunity continues to kill young poor girls in Juárez. "But now they know—the world is watching them," says Ensler, "and we will keep coming back."

Mariana Katzarova, a researcher on Russia for Amnesty International, has been involved with V-Day since 2001, when she brought it to her home country, Bulgaria.

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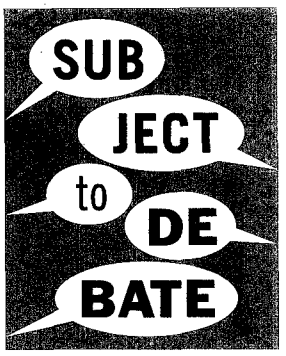
KATHA POLLITT

The Protocols of Mel Gibson



My friends had one question for me after I saw Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*: Is it anti-Semitic? It's a testament to Gibson's public relations genius that this is an open question. In the endless run-up to opening day, Gibson drove assorted Jewish spokespeople so wild with his absurd claims of persecution that pooh-poohing charges of anti-Semitism became a badge of professional cool; who wants to sound like Abraham Foxman, choleric head of the Anti-Defamation League? Except for David Denby, whose scathing review in *The New Yorker* should have set the tone, and of course the indefatigable Frank Rich, whose intestines Gibson has said he would like to have on a stick, early high-end reviewers like the *New York Times*'s A.O. Scott and *Newsweek*'s David Ansen have given Gibson a pass on a movie that could safely be shown at the Leni Riefenstahl Memorial Film Festival.

You'd think it was impolite to make anything of the fact that Gibson's father is a Holocaust denier who claims the European Jews simply moved to Australia. True, we don't choose our parents, but Mel Gibson has not only not dissociated himself from his father's views but indirectly affirmed them ("The man never lied to me in his life," he told Peggy Noonan in *Reader's Digest*; pressed to affirm that the Holocaust was real, he replied that many people died in World War II and some were Jews—the classic Holocaust-revisionist two-step). Nor would it do to dwell on the "traditional" (i.e., ultra right-wing) Catholicism Gibson practices, which specifically rejects the reforms of Vatican II, presumably including its repudiation of the belief that "the Jews" are collectively responsible for the death of Christ.

So how anti-Semitic is *The Passion*? Gibson claims that there are good Jews and bad Jews in the movie, as in the Gospels. This is true, but disingenuous: In *The Passion*, the high priest Caiaphas and his faction are not just bad, they fit neatly into ancient Christian stereotypes: They are rich, arrogant and gaudily dressed; they plot and scheme and bribe; they cleverly manipulate the brutal but straightforward Romans; they are gratuitously "cruel" and "hard-hearted," to quote Anne Catherine Emmerich, the nineteenth-century German nun whose visions of the Passion Gibson relied on for some of the more disgusting tortures he inflicts on Jesus. Physically, they are anti-Semitic cartoons: The priests have big noses and gnarly faces, lumpish bodies, yellow teeth; Herod Antipas and his court are a bizarre collection of oily-haired, epicene perverts. The "good Jews" look like Italian movie stars (Magdalene actually *is* an Italian movie star, the lovely Monica Bellucci); Mary, who would have been around 50 and appeared 70, could pass for a ripe 35. These visual characterizations follow not just the Oberammergau Passion Play that Hitler found so touching but a long tradition of Christian New Testament iconography in which the villains look Semitic and the heroes, although equally Jewish, look Northern European.

Gibson claims he's only telling the story as written in the Gospels, which he calls eyewitness accounts (historians say no). That the film is entirely in Aramaic and Latin underscores this bid for authenticity: "It is as it was," as his publicist falsely claimed the Pope had said. Thus Gibson, the literalist, presents himself as bending over backward to placate the you-know-who by removing from the subtitles (but not the soundtrack) the line from Matthew in which the crowd condemns itself: "Let his blood be on us and our children." Yet when called on his inaccuracies and distortions, Gibson claims artistic license. Thus, Pontius Pilate is upright and sensitive; too bad for Josephus, the first-century historian who described him as savage and corrupt. Most improbably, the temple priests tell their Roman overlord what to do. The Bible's brief mention of Jesus's flogging—one sentence in three Gospels, nothing in one—becomes a ten-minute homoerotic sadistic extravaganza that no human being could have survived, as if the point of the Passion was to show how tough Christ was.

Gibson adds considerably to the Gospels in ways that emphasize Jewish villainy. The Gospels contain no scene in which the Jewish guards who arrest Jesus whip him with chains, throw him over a bridge and dangle him over the water, choking, for fun; or in which Caiaphas and his most Fagin-resembling sidekick show up to watch Christ's scourging by the Romans; or in which Satan (played by a woman, for a nice touch of misogyny) flits among and merges with the crowd as it shouts, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Why does Gibson dress Mary and Magdalene in what look like nun's habits, if not to turn these two Jewish women into good Catholics *avant la lettre*? And why does he show an earthquake splitting the temple interior as Christ expires (in the Bible, a curtain is torn), if not to justify as God's vengeance the historical destruction of the temple by the Romans a few decades later and all the sufferings of the Jewish people since?

It's a mystery to me why the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has given this crude and kitschy film a thumbs up ("deeply personal work of devotional art…the Jewish people are at no time blamed collectively for Jesus' death"). Gibson has violated just about every precept of the conference's own 1988 "Criteria" for the portrayal of Jews in dramatizations of the Passion (no bloodthirsty Jews, no rabble, no use of Scripture that reinforces negative stereotypes of Jews, etc.). Even stranger is the enthusiasm for the film among Protestant evangelicals and fundamentalists, who seem not to realize how specifically Catholic Gibson's theology is. A generation ago, "Bible-believing" Protestants would have been up in arms over, among other "popish heresies," the quasi-divine role given to Mary and the reverence for Christ's blood (in one extra-biblical scene, Mary on her knees mops the floor where he has been scourged, using some towels given to her by Pilate's kind and thoughtful wife). Do evangelicals not have theology anymore—anything goes as long as it's "conservative," and puts Jesus on top?

The Passion is nondenominational bigotry: Jesus wept. ■

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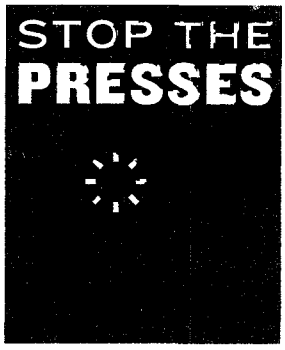
ERIC ALTERMAN

The (Not So) Gay Old *Times*



Perhaps you've heard that the *New York Times* fired a stringer named Jay Blotcher because he'd been a member of the anti-AIDS advocacy group ACT UP nearly fourteen years ago. Perhaps you've heard that ACT UP founder and fiery gay playwright Larry Kramer complained to publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. of "McCarthy-type blacklisting." Perhaps you're aware that although ACT UP did, way back when, single out the *Times* for what Kramer termed its "unconscionable refusal to write about us in any but the most hateful of ways, and for so long, and for your wretched, shameful early lack of coverage of AIDS," and even marched on Sulzberger Sr.'s house, the paper's current reputation for sensitivity to gay issues is sterling among mainstream institutions. Sulzberger Jr.'s *Times* is widely viewed as a corporate leader on diversity issues, as anyone who followed the Jayson Blair contretemps is well aware.

Well, I heard all this too, and the story didn't make sense. So I decided to look into it. Here's what I learned.

The *Times* is making its case not on Blotcher's membership in ACT UP, which really would be McCarthyism, but on his role as a "public spokesperson for an advocacy organization." Executive editor Bill Keller notes that Blotcher was identified as such in the newspaper as recently as 1998. Thanks in large measure to Blair, the *Times* is going over its lists of contributors with what Metro editor Susan Edgerley—who made the initial decision—admits is a policy of "setting the bar high to protect against any appearance of conflict of interest." Somebody remembered Blotcher's earlier role, and she made the move, she told me, to protect against "confusion about the two roles in the minds of readers." The editors argue that such strictures are even more necessary for stringers than staffers because editors can keep a much more watchful eye on the latter.

Blotcher explains that, yes, as a volunteer, he did a press release for a friend who was organizing a commemorative march for the tenth anniversary of ACT UP in 1997 and perhaps another one in 1998, in which he was listed as the "contact person." He distinguishes this from the role of "spokesperson," in which he served ACT UP, and later Queer Nation, more than a decade ago. (More recently he was the public face for Amfar, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, between 1995 and 1999.)

But Blotcher and his supporters point out that many *Times* staffers have relationships that could "confuse" readers. Indeed, medical correspondent Dr. Lawrence K. Altman has many such professional associations with various medical establishments, public and private. Bernard Weinraub covers Hollywood for the paper, while his wife is a head honcho at Sony Pictures. Just recently, the *Times* found itself embarrassed when one of its culture reporters, Jesse McKinley, accepted a makeover of his apartment, estimated to be worth more than $50,000, for an *Oprah* program. These cases do not involve the "appearance" of conflict-of-interest but its essence. (As Abe Rosenthal famously enunciated the standard years ago, and I paraphrase, "You can fuck an elephant for all we care, as long as you don't cover the circus.")

McKinley has now paid for a portion of his redecoration, Weinraub has reduced his coverage of Hollywood and, as a result of the Blotcher case, Altman's status was recently reviewed, in response to complaints by Blotcher's supporters, and pronounced kosher, according to *Times* spokeswoman Catherine Mathis. But the belief of some that Blotcher was singled out not for being gay but for being in ACT UP and Queer Nation continues to divide the paper internally.

Steve Reed, an editor for the NYT Regional Newspaper Group, who coordinates the Times Gay and Lesbian Caucus, thinks the editors made a reasonable decision, though he notes a division within the caucus itself. Bruce Lambert, a longtime *Times* reporter who covered ACT UP, complains of "an apparent blackballing" and notes, "By the premise being imposed on [Blotcher]...a long-ago former activist on breast cancer issues would be barred from being a hockey reporter."

Keller complained to me of attempts by Kramer "to turn this into a replay of the Stonewall raid." He cannot but be frustrated by some of the sloppy coverage of the events, particularly that which appeared in Howard Kurtz's online media column for the *Washington Post*, which left out all the complicating details. (This is particularly ironic, as readers of this column will be aware, since Kurtz, who reports on CNN for the *Post* while receiving a paycheck from CNN, provides a daily definition of journalistic conflict-of-interest.)

Even if one accepts the paper's argument that its only crime is a kind of post-Blair hyper-fastidiousness about appearances at the expense of fairness to one of its stringers, the story cannot be allowed to die there. First, both Edgerley and Keller declined my repeated invitations to delineate a consistent policy regarding just which kinds of associations are allowed and which aren't. And as the *Times* has been perfectly comfortable in the past to hire stars like Richard Burt and Leslie Gelb, who shuttled between high-level State Department appointments while covering one another for the paper, we are left with the appearance of favoritism and inconsistency for *machers* as opposed to stringers. (Let's hope Ahmad Chalabi doesn't show up in Times Square one day, looking to formalize his role as a WMD reporter.)

Second, for all its commendable commitment to diversity, the policy is still not working. The Jayson Blair/Gerald Boyd problem is just one overworked example. A second is that, with the departure of Adam Moss to *New York* magazine, the *Times* lacks a single person in a position of significant editorial authority—or on the editorial board for that matter—who is openly gay. As one longtime and loyal *Times* writer put it to me, "The problem is not homophobia; it's homo-ignorance. Nobody openly gay sits in on any of the big meetings."

In other words, the paper still has some serious 'splainin' to do. Let a thousand editorials bloom. ■

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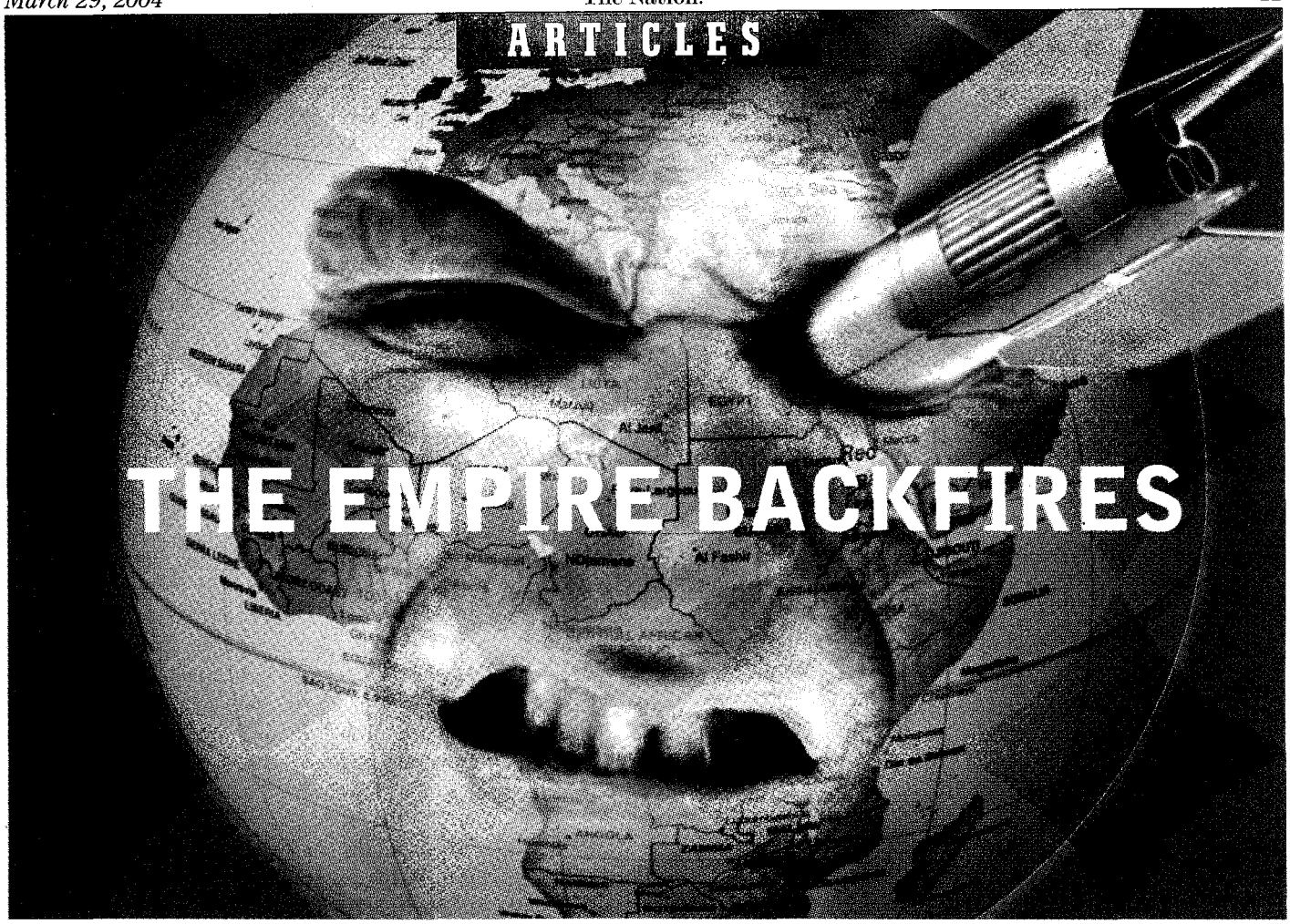

THE EMPIRE BACKFIRES

The first anniversary of the American invasion of Iraq has arrived. By now, we were told by the Bush Administration before the war, the flower-throwing celebrations of our troops' arrival would have long ended; their numbers would have been reduced to the low tens of thousands, if not to zero; Iraq's large stores of weapons of mass destruction would have been found and dismantled; the institutions of democracy would be flourishing; Kurd and Shiite and Sunni would be working happily together in a federal system; the economy, now privatized, would be taking off; other peoples of the Middle East, thrilled and awed, so to speak, by the beautiful scenes in Iraq, would be dismantling their own tyrannical regimes.

Instead, 549 American soldiers and uncounted thousands of Iraqis, military and civilian, have died; some $125 billion has been expended; no weapons of mass destruction have been found; the economy is a disaster; electricity and water are sometime things; America's former well-wishers, the Shiites, are impatient with the occupation; terrorist bombs are taking a heavy toll; and Iraq as a whole, far from being a model for anything, is a cautionary lesson in the folly of imperial rule in the twenty-first century. And yet all this is only part of the cost of the decision to invade and occupy Iraq. To weigh the full cost, one must look not just at the war itself but away from it, at the progress of the larger policy it served, at things that have been done elsewhere—some far from Iraq or deep in the past—and, perhaps above all, at things that have been left undone.

by JONATHAN SCHELL

Nuclear Fingerprints

While American troops were dying in Baghdad and Falluja and Samarra, Buhary Syed Abu Tahir, a Sri Lankan businessman, was busy making centrifuge parts in Malaysia and selling them to Libya and Iran and possibly other countries. The centrifuges are used for producing bomb-grade uranium. Tahir's project was part of a network set up by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the "father" of the Pakistani atomic bomb. This particular father stole most of the makings of his nuclear offspring from companies in Europe, where he worked during the 1980s. In the 1990s, the thief became a middleman—a fence—immensely enriching himself in the process. In fairness to Khan, we should add that almost everyone who has been involved in developing atomic bombs since 1945 has been either a thief or a borrower. Stalin purloined a bomb design from the United States, courtesy of the German scientist Klaus Fuchs, who worked on the Manhattan Project. China got help from Russia until the Sino-Soviet split put an end to it. Pakistan got secret help from China in the early 1970s. And now it turns out that Khan, among many, many other Pakistanis, almost certainly including the highest members of the government, has been helping Libya, Iran, North Korea and probably others obtain the bomb. That's apparently how Chinese designs—some still in Chinese—were found in Libya when its quixotic leader, Muammar Qaddafi, recently agreed to surrender his country's nuclear program to the Inter-

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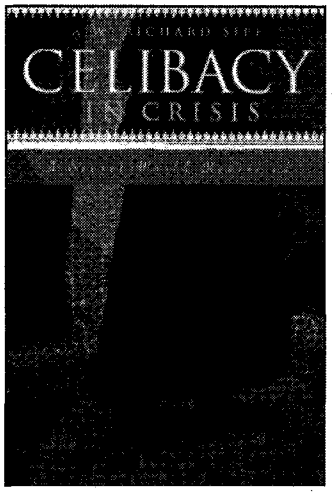

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national Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The rest of the designs were in English.

Were Klaus Fuchs's fingerprints on them? Only figuratively, because they were "copies of copies of copies," an official said. But such is the nature of proliferation. It is mainly a transfer of information from one mind to another. Copying is all there is to it. Sometimes, a bit of hardware needs to be transferred, which is where Tahir came in. Indeed, at least seven countries are already known to have been involved in the Pakistani effort, which Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the IAEA, called a "Wal-Mart" of nuclear technology and an American official called "one-stop shopping" for nuclear weapons. Khan even printed a brochure with his picture on it listing all the components of nuclear weapons that bomb-hungry customers could buy from him. "What Pakistan has done," the expert on nuclear proliferation George Perkovich, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has rightly said, "is the most threatening activity of proliferation in history. It's impossible to overstate how damaging this is."

Another word for this process of copying would be globalization. Proliferation is merely globalization of weapons of mass destruction. The kinship of the two is illustrated by other details of Tahir's story. The Sri Lankan first wanted to build his centrifuges in Turkey, but then decided that Malaysia had certain advantages. It had recently been seeking to make itself into a convenient place for Muslims from all over the world to do high-tech business. Controls were lax, as befits an export platform. "It's easy, quick, efficient. Do your business and disappear fast, in and out," Karim Raslan, a Malaysian columnist and social commentator, recently told Alan Sipress of the *Washington Post*. Probably that was why extreme Islamist organizations, including Al Qaeda operatives, had often chosen to meet there. Global terrorism is a kind of globalization, too. The linkup of such terrorism and the world market for nuclear weapons is a specter that haunts the world of the twenty-first century.

The War and Its Aims

But aren't we supposed to be talking about the Iraq war on this anniversary of its launch? We are, but wars have aims, and the declared aim of this one was to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In his State of the Union address in January 2002, the President articulated the threat he would soon carry out in Iraq: "The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." Later, he said we didn't want the next warning to be "a mushroom cloud." Indeed, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Colin Powell explicitly ruled out every other justification for the war. Asked about the other reasons, he said, "The President has not linked authority to go to war to any of those elements." When Senator John Kerry explained his vote for the resolution authorizing the war, he cited the Powell testimony. Thus not only Bush but also the man likely to be his Democratic chal-

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Jonathan Schell, the Harold Willens Peace Fellow at The Nation Institute, is the author, most recently, of The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People *(Metropolitan).*

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lenger in this year's election justified war solely in the name of nonproliferation.

Proliferation, however, is not, as the President seemed to think, just a rogue state or two seeking weapons of mass destruction; it is the entire half-century-long process of globalization that stretches from Klaus Fuchs's espionage to Tahir's nuclear arms bazaar and beyond. The war was a failure in its own terms because weapons of mass destruction were absent in Iraq; the war policy failed because they were present and spreading in Pakistan. For Bush's warning of a mushroom cloud over an American city, though false with respect to Iraq, was indisputably well-founded in regard to Pakistan's nuclear one-stop-shopping: The next warning stemming from this kind of failure could indeed be a mushroom cloud.

The questions that now cry out to be answered are, Why did the United States, standing in the midst of the Pakistani nuclear Wal-Mart, its shelves groaning with, among other things, centrifuge parts, uranium hexafluoride (supplied, we now know, to Libya) and helpful bomb-assembly manuals in a variety of languages, rush out of the premises to vainly ransack the empty warehouse of Iraq? What sort of nonproliferation policy could lead to actions like these? How did the Bush Administration, in the name of protecting the country from nuclear danger, wind up leaving it wide open to nuclear danger?

In answering these questions, it would be reassuring, in a way, to report that the basic facts were discovered only after the war, but the truth is otherwise. In the case of Iraq, it's now abundantly clear that some combination of deception, self-deception and outright fraud (the exact proportions of each are still under investigation) led to the manufacture of a gross and avoidable falsehood. In the months before the war, most of the governments of the world strenuously urged the United States not to go to war on the basis of the flimsy and unconvincing evidence it was offering. In the case of Pakistan, the question of how much the Administration knew before the war has scarcely been asked, yet we know that the most serious breach—the proliferation to North Korea—was reported and publicized before the war.

It's important to recall the chronology of the Korean aspect of Pakistan's proliferation. In January 2003 Seymour Hersh reported in *The New Yorker* that Pakistan had given North Korea extensive help with its nuclear program, including its launch of a uranium enrichment process. In return, North Korea was sending guided missiles to Pakistan. In June 2002, Hersh revealed, the CIA had sent the White House a report on these developments. On October 4, 2002, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs James Kelly confronted the North Koreans with the CIA information, and, according to Kelly, North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister, Kang Suk Ju, startled him by responding, "Of course we have a nuclear program." (Since then, the North Koreans have unconvincingly denied the existence of the uranium enrichment program.)

Bush of course had already named the Pyongyang government as a member of the "axis of evil." It had long been the policy of the United States that nuclearization of North Korea was intolerable. However, the Administration said nothing of the North Korean events to the Congress or the public. North Korea, which now had openly embarked on nuclear armament, and was even threatening to use nuclear weapons, was more dangerous than Saddam's Iraq. Why tackle the lesser problem in Iraq, the members of Congress would have had to ask themselves, while ignoring the greater in North Korea? On October 10, a week after the Kelly visit, the House of Representatives passed the Iraq resolution, and the next day the Senate followed suit. Only five days later, on October 16, did Bush's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, reveal what was happening in North Korea.

In short, from June 2002, when the CIA delivered its report to the White House, until October 16—the period in which the nation's decision to go to war in Iraq was made—the Administration knowingly withheld the news about North Korea and its Pakistan connection from the public. Even after the vote, Secretary of State Colin Powell strangely insisted that the North Korean situation was "not a crisis" but only "a difficulty." Nevertheless, he extracted a pledge from Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf, that the nuclear technology shipments to North Korea would stop. (They did not.) In March, information was circulating that both Pakistan and North Korea were helping Iran to develop atomic weapons. (The North Korean and Iranian crises are of course still brewing.)

In sum, the glaring contradiction between the policy of "regime change" for already disarmed Iraq and regime-support for proliferating Pakistan was not a postwar discovery; it was fully visible before the war. *The Nation* enjoys no access to intelligence files, yet in an article arguing the case against the war, this author was able to comment that an "objective ranking of nuclear proliferators in order of menace" would put "Pakistan first," North Korea second, Iran third and Iraq only fourth—and to note the curiosity that "the Bush Administration ranks them, of course, in exactly the reverse order, placing Iraq, which it plans to attack, first, and Pakistan, which it befriends and coddles, nowhere on the list." Was nonproliferation, then, as irrelevant to the Administration's aims in Iraq as catching terrorists? Or was protecting the nation and the world against weapons of mass destruction merely deployed as a smokescreen to conceal other purposes? And if so, what were they?

A New Leviathan

The answers seem to lie in the larger architecture of the Bush foreign policy, or Bush Doctrine. Its aim, which many have properly called imperial, is to establish lasting American hegemony over the entire globe, and its ultimate means is to overthrow regimes of which the United States disapproves, pre-emptively if necessary. The Bush Doctrine indeed represents more than a revolution in American policy; if successful, it would amount to an overturn of the existing international order. In the new, imperial order, the United States would be first among nations, and force would be first among its means of domination. Other, weaker nations would be invited to take their place in shifting coalitions to support goals of America's choosing. The United States would be so strong, the President has suggested, that other countries would simply drop out of the business of military competition, "thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace." Much as, in the early modern period, when nation-states were being born, absolutist kings, the masters of overwhelming military force within their countries, in effect said,

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"There is now a new thing called a nation; a nation must be orderly; we kings, we sovereigns, will assert a monopoly over the use of force, and thus supply that order," so now the United States seemed to be saying, "There now is a thing called globalization; the global sphere must be orderly; we, the sole superpower, will monopolize force throughout the globe, and thus supply international order."

And so, even as the Bush Administration proclaimed US military superiority, it pulled the country out of the world's major peaceful initiatives to deal with global problems—withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol to check global warming and from the International Criminal Court, and sabotaging a protocol that would have given teeth to the biological weapons convention. When the UN Security Council would not agree to American decisions on war and peace, it became "irrelevant"; when NATO allies balked, they became "old Europe." Admittedly, these existing

Bush's Lies About Iraq

As we mark the first anniversary of the beginning of Bush's war with Iraq, the five pillars of argument upon which the President based his Iraq adventure are crumbling into dust in a rather dramatic fashion. Yet the Bush Administration continues to brazenly invent new rationales for its foreign policy, shamelessly twisting the facts to support it. Let's review the five big lies Bush used as justification for his actions.

Lie #1—They Attacked Us: Iraq Supported Al Qaeda. Astonishingly, President Bush, in a rare moment of candor, finally admitted half a year after the invasion that there was no evidence Saddam Hussein's Iraq had any links to the 9/11 attacks, undermining eighteen months of implying the exact opposite. Yet in both of his recent big speeches—a brief and rather reserved statement after Saddam's capture and his macho 2004 State of the Union address—Bush again dished out the fundamental lie that the war and occupation of Iraq can reasonably be linked to the "war on terror," even as a new book by ex-Bush Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill described the Bush foreign policy team's consistent obsession with Iraq from the first days of the Administration.

Lies #2 and #3—Imminent Threats: Iraq's Bio-Chem and Nuclear Weapons Programs. A year after using his 2003 State of the Union address to paint Iraq's allegedly vast arsenal of WMD as a grave threat to the United States and the world, Bush wisely avoided mentioning anything about uranium there—though he did spend a great deal of his latest SOTU defending the war on the grounds that "had we failed to act, the dictator's weapons of mass destruction programs would continue to this day." Dick Cheney, in interviews with *USA Today* and the *Los Angeles Times*, echoed this fudging—last year "weapons," this year "programs"—declaring that "the jury's still out" on whether Iraq had WMD and that "I am a long way at this stage from concluding that somehow there was some fundamental flaw in our intelligence."

Only days later, chief US weapons inspector David Kay quit and began telling the world what the Bush Administration had been denying since taking office: that Saddam Hussein's regime was but a weak shadow of the semi-fearsome military force it had been at the time of the first Gulf War thirteen years ago; that it had no significant chemical, biological or nuclear weapons programs or stockpiles still in place; and that the UN inspections and allied bombing runs in the 1990s had been much more effective than their critics had believed at eroding these programs.

Lie #4—It Will Be Easy: Iraq as a "Cakewalk." "The capture of Saddam Hussein does not mean the end of violence in Iraq," Bush admitted, putting the lie to the idiotic and arrogant statements by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and others that policing Iraq would be a simple matter that could be quickly delegated to Iraqis as soon as they stopped celebrating the US military's arrival and cleaned up all those flowers they were going to throw.

Reality has continued to diverge from the White House's neat depictions of inexorable progress. In the weeks after Saddam's capture, the number of US soldiers killed actually increased, several helicopters were downed by enemy fire, and on Christmas Day alone there were eighteen attacks, including nine nearly simultaneous rocket grenade launches on embassies, apartments and the "green zone," which houses the Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters. American KIAs have passed 500, while uncounted Iraqis continue to die in undocumented skirmishes.

Lie #5—The Moral Justification: Iraq as a Democratic Model. As the other lies upon which this war were based have been crumbling, this one has moved to the forefront. For war apologists such as the *New York Times*'s Thomas Friedman, if we can "bring democracy to Iraq," all those immoral means will justify this noble end. Here, too, we find grave problems continuing to frustrate the fantasies of neocons and neoliberals alike: The Kurds want to retain the large de facto autonomy they've achieved in the north; the Sunni areas continue to be extremely hostile to the occupation; and the long-oppressed majority Shiites are protesting in the streets in the tens of thousands, demanding one-man, one-vote elections. The CIA now considers civil war in Iraq a serious possibility.

Just as it didn't solve the stunning array of problems facing Iraq, the capture of Saddam did nothing to heal the rifts in our own country, where the lies of this Administration have so polarized the populace that this election year promises to be extremely nasty. We Americans now have but three options: We can deny that the Administration lied and continues to lie about Saddam's ties to terror and the threat he allegedly posed to the United States; we can be aware of the lies, but cling to a faith that good things will come from them, that the ends justify the means; or we can get angry about the lies and how truth has become a casualty of 9/11.

The lies of this Administration concerning Iraq rise to the level of the greatest scandals in American history. Now it is time to clean up the mess and reinvigorate our democracy.

CHRISTOPHER SCHEER, ROBERT SCHEER AND LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY

Christopher Scheer, Robert Scheer and Lakshmi Chaudhry are the authors of The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq, *published by Akashic Books and Seven Stories Press.*

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international treaties and institutions were not a full-fledged cooperative system; rather, they were promising foundations for such a system. In any case, the Administration wanted none of it.

Richard Perle, who until recently served on the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, seemed to speak for the Administration in an article he wrote for the *Guardian* the day after the Iraq war was launched. He wrote, "The chatterbox on the Hudson [*sic*] will continue to bleat. What will die is the fantasy of the UN as the foundation of a new world order. As we sift the debris, it will be important to preserve, the better to understand, the intellectual wreckage of the liberal conceit of safety through international law administered by international institutions."

In this larger plan to establish American hegemony, the Iraq war had an indispensable role. If the world was to be orderly, then proliferation must be stopped; if force was the solution to proliferation, then pre-emption was necessary (to avoid that mushroom cloud); if pre-emption was necessary, then regime change was necessary (so the offending government could never build the banned weapons again); and if all this was necessary, then Iraq was the one country in the world where it all could be demonstrated. Neither North Korea nor Iran offered an opportunity to teach these lessons—the first because it was capable of responding with a major war, even nuclear war, and the second because even the Administration could see that US invasion would be met with fierce popular resistance. It's thus no accident that the peril of weapons of mass destruction was the sole justification in the two legal documents by which the Administration sought to legitimize the war—HJ Resolution 114 and Security Council Resolution 1441. Nor is it an accident that the proliferation threat played the same role in the domestic political campaign for the war—by forging the supposed link between the "war on terror" and nuclear danger. In short, absent the new idea that proliferation was best stopped by pre-emptive use of force, the new American empire would have been unsalable, to the American people or to Congress. Iraq was the foundation stone of the bid for global empire.

The reliance on force over cooperation that was writ large in the imperial plan was also writ small in the occupation of Iraq. How else to understand the astonishing failure to make any preparation for the political, military, policing and even technical challenges that would face American forces? If a problem, large or small, had no military solution, this Administration seemed incapable of even seeing it. The United States was as blind to the politics of Iraq as it was to the politics of the world.

Thus we don't have to suppose that Bush officials were indifferent to the spectacular dangers that Khan's network posed to the safety of the United States and the world or that the Iraqi resistance would pose to American forces. We only have to suppose that they were simply unable to recognize facts they had failed to acknowledge in their overarching vision of a new imperial order. In both cases, ideology trumped reality.

The same pattern is manifest on an even larger scale. Just now, the peoples of the world have embarked, some willingly and some not, on an arduous, wrenching, perilous, mind-exhaustingly complicated process of learning how to live as one indivisibly connected species on our one small, endangered planet. Seen in a certain light, the Administration's imperial bid, if successful, would amount to a kind of planetary coup d'état, in which the

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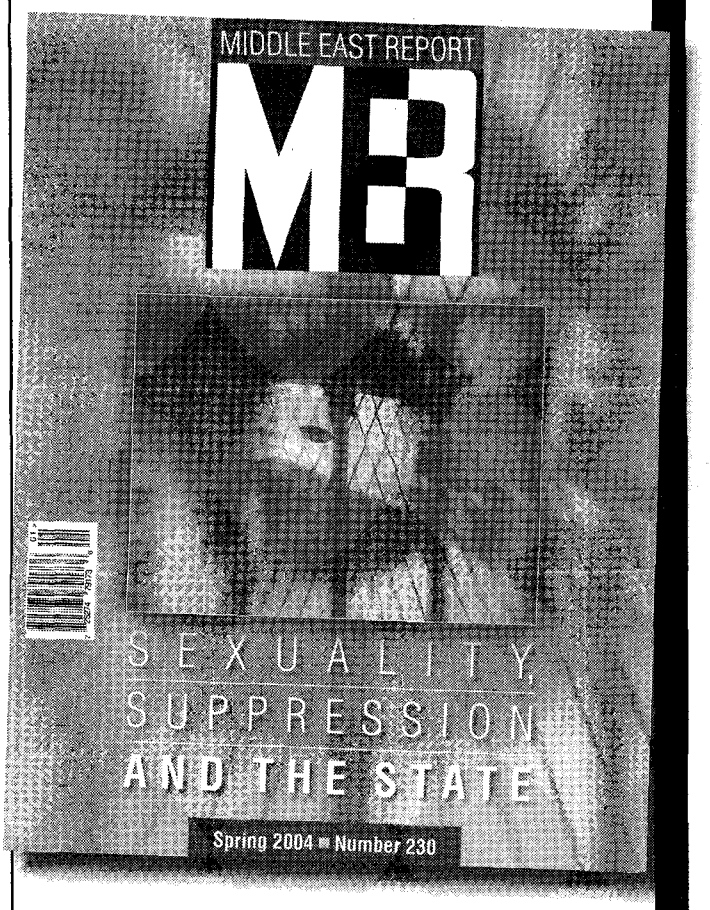

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world's dominant power takes charge of this process by virtue of its almost freakishly superior military strength. Seen in another, less dramatic light, the American imperial solution has interposed a huge, unnecessary roadblock between the world and the Himalayan mountain range of urgent tasks that it must accomplish no matter who is in charge: saving the planet from overheating; inventing a humane, just, orderly, democratic, accountable global economy; redressing mounting global inequality and poverty; responding to human rights emergencies, including genocide; and, of course, stopping proliferation as well as rolling back the existing arsenals of nuclear arms. None of these exigencies can be met as long as the world and its greatest power are engaged in a wrestling match over how to proceed.

Does the world want to indict and prosecute crimes against humanity? First, it must decide whether the International Criminal Court will do the job or entrust it to unprosecutable American forces. Do we want to reverse global warming and head off the extinction of the one-third of the world's species that, according to a report published in *Nature* magazine, are at risk in the next fifty years? First, the world's largest polluter has to be drawn into the global talks. Do we want to save the world from weapons of mass destruction? First, we have to decide whether we want to do it together peacefully or permit the world's only superpower to attempt it by force of arms.

No wonder, then, that the Administration, as reported by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in these pages, has mounted an assault on the scientific findings that confirm these dangers to the world [see "The Junk Science of George W. Bush," March 8]. The United States' destructive hyperactivity in Iraq cannot be disentangled from its neglect of global warming. Here, too, ideology is the enemy of fact, and empire is the nemesis of progress.

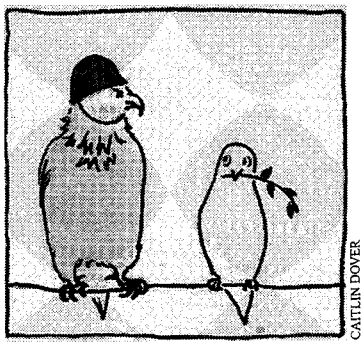
If the engine of a train suddenly goes off the rails, a wreck ensues. Such is the war in Iraq, now one year old. At the same time, the train's journey forward is canceled. Such is the current paralysis of the international community. Only when the engine is back on the tracks and starts in the right direction can either disaster be overcome. Only then will everyone be able to even begin the return to the world's unfinished business. ■

THE DEMOCRATS CAN MAKE A PERSUASIVE CASE THAT BUSH IS OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM.

The Goldwater Parallel

FRANCES FITZGERALD

On January 29, just after the New Hampshire primary, former president Bill Clinton told Senate Democrats not to be afraid of challenging Bush aggressively. According to one source who attended the meeting, he said that in his view "the Republicans will try to set the agenda and intimidate us and that is why we lost in 2002, and we cannot let that happen again."



The Democrats are today in a combative mood. In the recent primaries the leading candidates have gone after Bush on domestic issues as if they were all William Jennings Bryan at a July 4 picnic in Nebraska. More important, they have attacked him fiercely on national security grounds. Howard Dean led the way months ago by condemning the invasion of Iraq, breaking the silence the Democrats had held since 9/11. On entering the race in September, Gen. Wesley Clark followed suit and went on to attack the Administration's "election-driven, poll-driven, ideologically driven foreign policy" on broader grounds. In December John Kerry, previously on the defensive for his vote for the Iraq war resolution, turned his campaign around, and since then he has not only denounced Bush's "strategy of unilateral and pre-emptive war" but assailed his whole approach to national security. George Bush, he said the night of his victory in Iowa, "has run the most arrogant, inept, reckless and ideological foreign policy in the modern history of our country."

What a transformation in the course of a year! In the fall of 2002 the Democrats cowered before Bush, believing him the invincible Commander in Chief of the "war on terror." At a time when they controlled the Senate they failed to hold the in-depth hearings they had promised on Iraq, and many who doubted the invasion would serve the interests of American security nevertheless voted for the war resolution. For lack of any debate on the matter, the majority of the American public supported the invasion, and in the Congressional elections the Republicans beat the Democrats easily, running ads putting those who voted against war in the company of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

In a recent interview Bush made it clear that he intends to run as a "war President" and to win as the defender of American security. His task will be more difficult this year than it was for him in 2000, given the continuing conflict in Iraq and the melting away of his justifications for the war. Nonetheless, Americans have always re-elected their war Presidents (two, Truman and Johnson, chose not to seek re-election), and according to polls most see Bush as successfully prosecuting the war on terror and view the Republicans as stronger on national security than the Democrats. Thus, however important healthcare and the economy are to voters, the Democrats must change this perception in order to win. (Everyone knows this—not least the primary voters who left Dean for a candidate with stronger national security credentials.) The question is how.

Frances FitzGerald is the author of Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam *(Back Bay) and* Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War *(Simon & Schuster).*

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Some answers were suggested at a two-day conference on alternative national security strategies in Washington in October. The event, sponsored by the Center for American Progress, the Century Foundation and *The American Prospect* magazine, became the occasion for Democratic and moderate Republican foreign policy experts to launch a more or less concerted attack on Administration policies. Those who turned out to speak included Senators Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and Chuck Hagel and a number of high-level officials from Democratic administrations past: Ted Sorensen, William Perry and Richard Holbrooke, among others. The panels were filled with policy experts, all of whom had served in government as career diplomats, military officers or political appointees, and most of whom now hang out at think tanks such as Brookings, the Kennedy School of Government and the Council on Foreign Relations. The speakers, in other words, represented the group that any Democratic candidate would turn to if elected President. (In fact, a number of them were already advising one or another of the candidates.) In the course of two days they not only laid out an alternate vision of how to deal with international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and the consequences of the invasion of Iraq, but in attacking Administration policies they indicated a strategy for the coming campaign.

According to Carter Administration hawk Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Bush Administration has embraced 'a paranoiac view of the world.'

The major themes of the conference, struck at the outset by John Podesta, head of the Center for American Progress, and Robert Kuttner, co-editor of *The American Prospect*, were that the Bush Administration has made a radical break with the historic principles of American foreign policy, that it is failing to meet the challenges of 9/11 and that it is weakening the United States abroad and undermining democracy at home. Coming from such establishment figures, these charges were not only remarkable but unprecedented. In the early 1970s Democrats in Congress protested the Vietnam War and attacked the accumulated war powers of "the imperial presidency," but they didn't condemn Nixon's whole foreign policy, much less read it out of the American tradition. Yet speaker after speaker at this conference expressed the view that an ideological fringe group had taken over the Administration and was posing a long-term threat to American national security.

Chairing one of the panels was Samuel Berger, Clinton's National Security Adviser, who briefly defined the "Bush Doctrine" and pointed to what he saw as its most novel and alarming features: the abandonment of deterrence in favor of pre-emption, in which uncertainty becomes a reason for action, military power is seen as the dominant instrument to advance US national interests and alliances are rejected in favor of ad hoc coalitions. The view is that if we exercise our power, international support will just fall in behind us. These principles, he concluded, "have been proven almost completely wrong" and have led inexorably to "the mess we are in today in Iraq."

Senator Hagel, a Republican from Nebraska and a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee, criticized Administration policies indirectly but nonetheless acerbically. "Alliance in multilateral institutions," he said, "must be understood as expansions of our influence, not as constraints on our power." He went on to protest that the war on terror cannot be conducted in a purely military fashion and that with US forces overcommitted abroad, "We run the risk of destroying the best military force structure in history." This military approach, he suggested, was destructive in another way as well. American leadership, he said, rests on maintaining the confidence and trust of others around the world, and "today that confidence and trust are failing."

That the Administration has undermined the authority of the United States was a theme taken up by a number of speakers, most forcefully by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Adviser. The leading hawk in the Carter Administration, Brzezinski surprised many in the audience by the harshness of his attack. Why is it, he asked, that the United States is at the zenith of its power and the nadir of its political standing in the world? His answer was that the Administration has "embraced...a paranoiac view of the world," summarized in the expression, "He who is not with us is against us"—a paraphrase of one of Bush's favorite dictums. The Administration, he continued, has made "the war on terrorism" its central and defining focus. Not only does this reflect "a rather narrow and extremist vision of foreign policy" but it has led to an abstract, quasi-theological view of the enemy—and further to a dramatic intelligence failure on Iraq that "was contributed to and was compensated for by extremist demagogy."

In proposing alternative strategies to deal with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the policy experts on the panels argued that the Administration had a narrow, military conception of power and was therefore not using all the means at its disposal or looking at the long-term problems, such as how to deal with failed states.

Toward the end of the proceedings a journalist asked one of the conference organizers if the apparent agreement among the speakers did not conceal real differences. The answer was no. A more complete answer would be that there are shadings of differences, but they are nothing next to the divide that separates Democrats and moderate Republicans from the Bush Administration. In the course of three years, the internationalists in both parties have come to view the Administration's approach to foreign policy as qualitatively different from that of all other administrations past, and the product of a worldview alien to their own.

The Democrats, in other words, have a strong critique of the Administration and a strong set of policy alternatives. The real question is whether in the coming months they will be able to make their case with the necessary force and conviction. Perhaps the biggest hurdle will be overcoming the remaining sense of defeatism within the party.

In a long article on the Democrats and foreign policy in the *New York Times Magazine* of January 4, James Traub, a journalist who attended the conference, reported that the antiwar rhetoric of Dean, Clark—and then Kerry—had caused considerable dismay among some Democratic strategists. To win in November, he wrote, the Democratic Party must regain its status as the party of national security, which it had in the days of John F. Kennedy and lost during the Vietnam War. The Democratic foreign policy establishment, he continued, today has a muscular approach that recognizes the importance of power, including military power, in

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promoting American interests. Dean, Kerry and Clark do not disagree with it, he wrote, and yet they have played to the antiwar sentiment and "that deep discomfort with the exercise of power [and] the skepticism about American legitimacy" among primary voters. Thus, Traub concluded, the winner may lose the general election as George McGovern did in 1972 because, as Bill Clinton once observed, "strong and wrong beats weak and right."

Traub's characterization of primary voters is a cliché among pundits but it is an anachronism dating from the Vietnam War. Yes, Democratic primary voters oppose Bush's war in Iraq, but that doesn't mean that they think all uses of American military power are by definition illegitimate. (Many on the left of the party, after all, supported the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan—and many supported US military actions in Bosnia and Kosovo.) What's interesting about the argument is what it says about the lessons *some* Democrats have learned from history.

During the cold war, it is true, the hawks almost always prevailed against the doves. Kennedy, as Traub reminds us, campaigned as a hawk, charging that the Eisenhower Administration had allowed a "missile gap" to develop between US and Soviet forces. (The charge turned out to be false. It was, after all, based on much the same kind of intelligence that the Bush Administration used to justify the war in Iraq: few facts and a great deal of biased interpretation.) Kennedy was, of course, less of a hawk than he seemed in the campaign, but when the situation in Vietnam deteriorated, he put in more American advisers. Both he and Johnson had grave doubts about a major troop commitment but feared that the right would pillory them if they "lost Southeast Asia." They chose strong, and Johnson was proven wrong, but even after the American public had turned against the war, McGovern was roundly defeated by Nixon. In 1972–74 the liberal Democrats in Congress helped to end the disastrous conflict, but the counteroffensive was not long in coming.

During the Ford Administration the hawks in both parties attacked détente and charged that the liberals lacked the will to fight the cold war. Donald Rumsfeld, then Defense Secretary, and Senator Henry Jackson, a Democrat from Washington State, spearheaded the effort and managed to stop Kissinger's attempt to conclude a second nuclear arms treaty with the Soviet Union. At that point the bipartisan foreign policy establishment fell apart. Its left wing dominated the Carter Administration, but after the Shah fell and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, its right wing pinned Carter as weak on national security. In 1980 Ronald Reagan campaigned on old-fashioned cold war rhetoric, and the Republicans carried the day. Then in 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and George Bush senior decided to contest the invasion by force. A number of Senate Democrats, including John Kerry (mistakenly in my view), voted against the decision, and some paid a political price for it.

This is the history the Democratic foreign policy establishment knows all too well. It's what led many Democrats to vote for the resolution on Iraq in 2002. It's the burden they carry.

Yet what is missing from the cold war history of hawks triumphant is that in 1964 Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in a landslide. In that campaign Goldwater represented the populist right wing of his party with its aggressive nationalism and its

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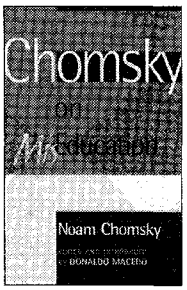

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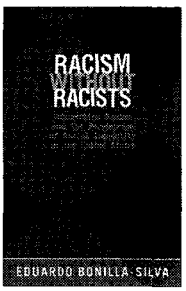

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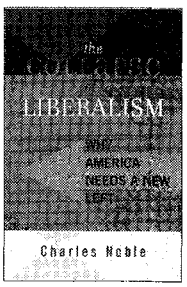

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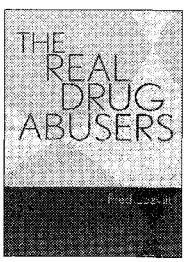

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fundamentalist faith in the efficacy of military superiority. That year he proposed to move away from deterrence and containment to mount a more active challenge to the Soviet Union—one that might include using tactical nuclear weapons to prevent the Soviets from crushing an uprising in Eastern Europe. The bipartisan foreign policy establishment considered Goldwater beyond the pale, and helped Johnson convince the public he was dangerous.

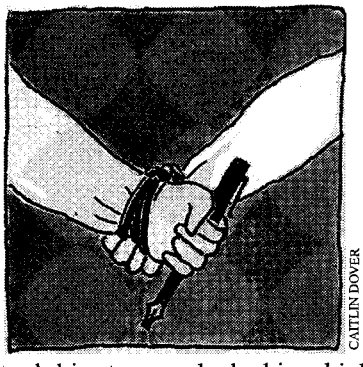
Those speakers at the conference who charged that an ideological fringe group dominates the Administration seemed to be pointing to a similar strategy for this campaign. Of course, George W. Bush cannot be as easily marginalized as Goldwater. Not only is he the incumbent, but because of the realignment of the conservative South over the past three decades, the Republican Party looks much more like the Goldwater party than it did in the mid-1960s. Yet it's necessary to make the case, as Senator Kerry did in a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in December, that Bush has "abandoned the fundamental tenets that have guided our foreign policy for more than half a century," that the Iraq war has made the country weaker and that the strategy of "unilateral, pre-emptive war" is "profoundly threatening to America's place in the world and to the safety and prosperity of our own society." For one thing, the Democrats cannot change the perception that Bush is strong on national security if they accept his own definition of what constitutes an effective strategy. For another, much rides on it. In this election the voters will decide whether the Bush Doctrine, with its dangerous contempt for other nations and the rule of law, is a strange aberration in this country's history or a lasting feature of its foreign policy. ■

IN IRAQ'S MEDIA WAR, US TROOPS ARE IMPRISONING AND ABUSING ARAB JOURNALISTS.

Al Jazeera Goes to Jail

CHRISTIAN PARENTI

Salah Hassan looks sad and very tired. The Al Jazeera cameraman, a 33-year-old father of two, is recounting his tale of incarceration in a soft and matter-of-fact tone. Sipping tea in the lobby of the hotel that serves as Al Jazeera's Baghdad bureau, he explains how on November 3 of last year he raced to the site of a roadside bomb attack on a US military convoy in Dialah, near the eastern Iraqi city of Baquba. While he was interviewing people at the scene, US troops who had previously taken photographs of Hassan at other events arrested him, took him to a police station, interrogated him and repeatedly accused the cameraman of knowing in advance about the bomb attack and of lying in wait to get footage. "I told them to review my tapes, that it was clear I had arrived thirty or forty minutes after the blast. They told me I was a liar," says Hassan.



CAITLIN DOVER

From Baquba, Hassan says he was taken to the military base at Baghdad International Airport, held in a bathroom for two days, then flown hooded and bound to Tikrit. After two more days in another bathroom, he was loaded onto a five-truck convoy of detainees and shipped south to Abu Ghraib, a Saddam-built prison that now serves as the American military's main detention center and holds about 13,000 captives.

Once inside the sprawling prison, Hassan says, he was greeted by US soldiers who sang "Happy Birthday" to him through his tight plastic hood, stripped him naked and addressed him only as "Al Jazeera," "boy" or "bitch." He was forced to stand hooded, bound and naked for eleven hours in the bitter autumn night air; when he fell, soldiers kicked his legs to get him up again. In the morning, Hassan says, he was made to wear a dirty red jumpsuit that was covered with someone else's fresh vomit and interrogated by two Americans in civilian clothes. They made the usual accusations that Hassan and Al Jazeera were in cahoots with "terrorists."

While most Abu Ghraib prisoners are held in large barracks-like tents in open-air compounds surrounded by razor wire, Hassan says he was locked in a high-security isolation unit of tiny cells. Down the tier from him was an old woman who sobbed incessantly and a mentally deranged 13-year-old girl who would scream and shriek until the American guards released her into the hall, where she would run up and down; exhausted, she would eventually return to her cell voluntarily. Hassan says that all other prisoners in the unit, mostly men, were ordered to remain silent or risk being punished with denial of food, water and light.

Elsewhere in Abu Ghraib, Hassan's colleague Suheib Badr Darwish was also in lockup. He had been arrested in Samarra on November 18 and, according to a colleague of his at Al Jazeera, Darwish was badly beaten by US troops.

Meanwhile, on the outside, the network hired a top-flight lawyer named Hider Nur Al Mulha to start working Hassan's case through Iraq's largely wrecked court system. Eventually Hassan was brought before a panel of the Iraqi Governing Council's freshly minted Federal Supreme Court, which was set up alongside its war crimes tribunal for trying the likes of Saddam Hussein and his henchmen. Salah Hassan, journalist, was the subject of the Court's first hearing. He was released for lack of evidence. After three more days in Abu Ghraib, this time in one of the prison's open-air camps, Hassan, still in his vomit-stained red jumpsuit, was dumped on a street just outside Baghdad on December 18.

Christian Parenti, who has been covering the US occupation of Iraq for The Nation, *is a fellow at the CUNY Graduate School's Center for Place, Culture and Politics. His book* The Freedom: Shadows and Hallucinations in Occupied Iraq *is due out from the New Press this fall.*

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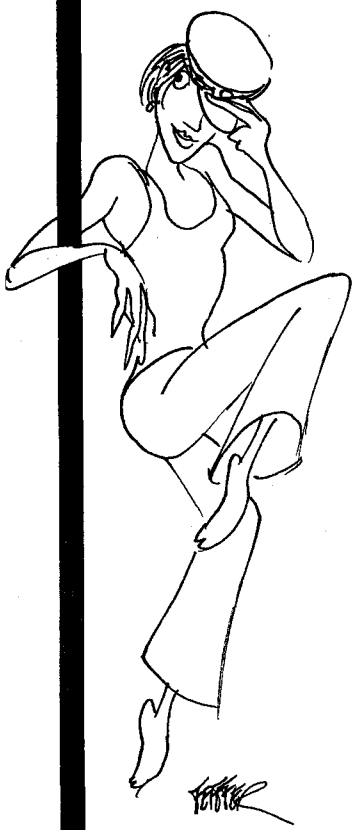

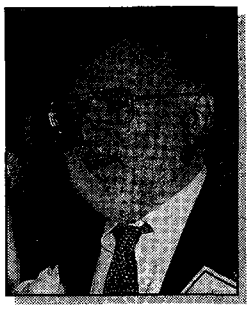

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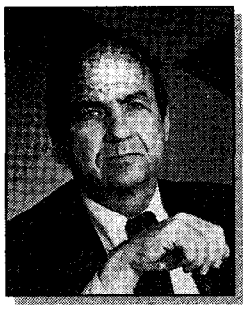

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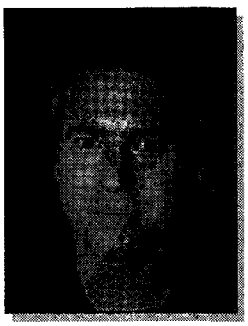

CHRISTOPHER SCHEER
CO-AUTHOR OF *THE FIVE BIGGEST LIES BUSH TOLD US ABOUT IRAQ*

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Dec. 8	Wed	Phillipsburg, St. Maarten	8:00AM	6:00PM
Dec. 9	Thu	Road Town, Tortola	7:00AM	4:00PM
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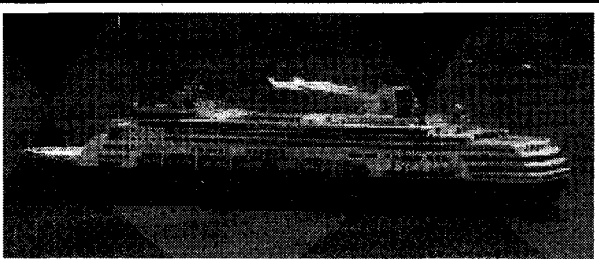

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Darwish was released more than a month later, on January 25, again for lack of evidence.

Military officials did not respond to my requests for a tour of Abu Ghraib, nor were most of my numerous calls and e-mails about the cases of Hassan and Darwish returned. The one military spokesperson who did address relations with Al Jazeera on the record was Lieut. Col. Daniel Williams of the Coalition Joint Task Force 7; his comment was, "Al Jazeera is a welcome guest and professional news organization." As one source at the civilian Coalition Provisional Authority explained, "Anything about Al Jazeera is very sensitive, so any on-the-record comment would have to come from pretty far up in the hierarchy. Only a very senior person can deal with this." But repeated calls to the CPA's senior spokesperson, Dan Senor, produced no response.

Disturbingly, these two cases fit into a larger pattern of US government hostility toward Al Jazeera, provoked by the network's tough reporting on the Iraqi occupation. And this hostility is best viewed in the context of the escalating, multimillion-dollar regional media war between Al Jazeera and the US government.

As the US military harasses Al Jazeera, the US government is attempting to answer the network in its own language and format.

Donald Rumsfeld has called Al Jazeera's coverage "outrageous" and "inexcusably biased" and implied that he'd like to see the satellite channel thrown out of Iraq. So far the American military has bombed the network's offices in both Baghdad and Kabul, killing one employee; arrested and briefly jailed twenty-one of Al Jazeera's reporters; and now has imprisoned and allegedly abused and humiliated Hassan and Darwish in ways that the UN convention on such matters would consider torture.

At the same time that the US military is harassing Al Jazeera reporters, other parts of the US government, including the State Department, are attempting to answer Al Jazeera in its own language and format. On February 14 the United States launched a nominally independent, US-funded Arabic-language satellite channel called Al Hurra, which means "the free one." The purpose of this effort is to address the lack of popular support for the US occupation in Iraq, as well as the deepening crisis of American legitimacy throughout the Arab world; polls from the region indicate that more and more people hate the United States every day.

Unlike other US-funded forays into Arabic-language media, Al Hurra, with an annual budget of $62 million, could be quite sophisticated and possibly effective in reshaping the beliefs of the politically important and demographically dominant Arab youth scene. The new channel has a stable of proven Arab journalists—one senior producer is a Palestinian who was poached from Al Jazeera, while the channel's top managers are Lebanese Christians with proven journalistic track records. On the other hand, the channel is based in Virginia, includes Colin Powell on its board of directors and its first broadcast was a pre-recorded interview with George W. Bush—none of which bode well for winning Arab hearts and minds.

Regardless of how well Al Hurra fares, Al Jazeera faces increasing obstacles to its reporting in Iraq as its correspondents are harassed, arrested, abused and killed by US troops.

So far, Al Jazeera's management has kept rather quiet about the cases of Hassan and Darwish. When I interviewed Ceddah Abdelhak, the channel's general manager in Baghdad, he insisted that the channel had publicized the cases, and he was clearly upset about the bad treatment of his staff. But other journalists in Baghdad say that Al Jazeera is under so much pressure from the Americans that its owners in Qatar are afraid the channel could be expelled from Iraq if they push too hard on any issue that upsets the CPA.

This is not an unfounded fear. According to sources that insisted on anonymity, the coalition called the network's managers in Iraq to the Republican Palace in Baghdad for a meeting in late January, at which the CPA's head counsel threatened Al Jazeera with expulsion if the network did not stop "destabilizing the occupation" with its tough reporting and intense editorial criticism. Allegedly, the CPA attorney explained that the coalition needed no legal justification to expel Al Jazeera and implied that US authorities were even pressuring the Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to rein in Al Jazeera, which, though run independently, is owned by the government of Qatar.

Another Al Jazeera adversary is the US–appointed Iraqi Governing Council, which recently barred the network from covering its sparsely attended meetings. The IGC was much more aggressive with the next most prominent Arabic-language network, Al Arabiya, which it threw out of Iraq for two months beginning in late December of last year. During that suspension, Al Arabiya's equipment was seized and its journalists faced $1,000 fines or possibly a year in prison if they violated the sanction. The network's offense had been "incitement to murder" by playing a taped message from Saddam Hussein, who was then in hiding.

Arabs working for other media outlets have also been harassed by US troops. Mazen Dana of Reuters was shot and killed by an American soldier outside Abu Ghraib prison in August. Then, in January, elements of the 82nd Airborne Division stationed in Falluja jailed and allegedly beat a three-man Arab-language crew, also from Reuters. The news agency immediately lodged a formal complaint with the US military, charging that its journalists had been abused while in detention. A Reuters freelancer told me that one of the journalists was later hospitalized.

Travel the roads of the so-called Sunni Triangle looking for action, and one can get plenty of comment about Al Jazeera from US troops who are lower down in the ranks. More than once I have met soldiers in the field who respond to requests for interviews or permission to enter their area of operations with, "As long as you're not Al Jazeera." One officer with the 82nd Airborne in Falluja claims that Al Jazeera filmed an attack on his unit in which one of his sergeants was impaled with debris from a bomb and then burned to death in the ensuing fire.

"We knew something was wrong when we saw people with cameras," explained the young lieutenant with a controlled bitterness. "Later my guys said they saw footage of it on Al Jazeera." When I pushed the lieutenant and his soldiers on this point, it was unclear whether the men had actually seen footage of the attack or just of the aftermath, and whether it was even on Al Jazeera.

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A few events like this and the hatred for Al Jazeera builds into a slow-burning passion among the grunts. Stories of Al Jazeera's perfidy now circulate among the troops with the tenacity of urban myths. And while Al Jazeera programming includes Western-style fashion shows and mainstream business news, it also gives ample time to the views of anti-American Arab nationalists and political Islamists who hate and excoriate the occupation. Yet as several well-placed sources explained, while the fixers and reporters of Al Jazeera are connected enough and numerous enough that some of them could probably work with the resistance to film attacks as they happen, they do not, both because they fear expulsion and because of explicit orders from the network's highest echelons. Indeed, the coalition has not documented a single instance of an Al Jazeera journalist conspiring in an attack on the occupation.

The pressure on Al Jazeera may be having the desired effect. Average Iraqis increasingly dismiss its news as soft on the occupation. Al Jazeera's general manager himself says the network's coverage is now "more balanced" than it once was, because it gives increased airtime to US claims of steadily increasing peace, progress and prosperity. Al Jazeera's main spokesperson, Jihad Ballout, was more circumspect in his comments on relations with the Americans in Iraq. "This war has been very hard for all of the press to cover. This is to some extent due to the security concern of the US, the UK and the Iraqis, but it seems that Al Jazeera has gotten more than its fair share of attention. While we understand the security concerns, we believe the media should have the space to do its mandated job."

Today Hassan is back at work, as is Darwish. Al Jazeera is still in action, and Al Hurra is the public face of America's ideological offensive in the Middle East. Viewed from outside, the media environment in Iraq looks open and fair. But the continual abuse of Arab journalists is the more accurate core sample. Reading this political sediment one sees that the American project in Iraq is made of imperial ambition, not liberty and democracy. More broadly, the intimidation and mistreatment of Al Jazeera by the world's most powerful army should be seen as a threat to press freedom everywhere. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

up on nonproliferation and calmly accept the spread of nuclear weapons. I agree that the unilateral invasion of Iraq sent a strong signal that acquiring nuclear weapons might be a way to deter pre-emptive US attacks. But the answer is not, as Wallerstein puts it, "to learn to live with it."

The answer is, first, to demand regime change here at home, throwing out the Bushies and their policies of nuclear threats, new nuclear weapons and pre-emptive attacks. Second, and as important, is for citizens, especially *Nation* readers, to continue to organize and work through organizations like Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) to push the Democrats to endorse our SMART Security platform. It has already been signed by thousands of citizens and adopted at issue caucuses in Iowa, by Democratic Party platform committees in Wisconsin and Oregon and will soon be introduced in Congress.

SMART Security, among other things, calls for the United States to live up to its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to halt new nuclear weapons development and renewed nuclear testing and to move to a sustainable energy future that does not depend on outmoded, dangerous and unhealthy fossil fuels and nuclear power.

Nuclear weapons have already been declared illegal by the World Court, denounced as morally unacceptable by major faith groups and demonstrated by PSR in countless studies to be unacceptably barbaric, indiscriminate and capable of huge numbers of deaths, horrible injuries and ecological damage in even their smallest possible uses. Only a few nations have nuclear weapons now, and the majority sit in good ol' American hands. To accept calmly their proliferation is, I'm afraid, a bit like NRA calls for all citizens to pack a weapon because "an armed society is a polite society." I hope Wallerstein will reconsider and, with other *Nation* aficionados, sign our SMART Security platform and check more detailed arguments against the Bush Doctrine and nuclear proliferation at PSR's www.psr.org/smartsecurity.

ROBERT K. MUSIL
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Gainesville, Fla.

■ Immanuel Wallerstein writes that Israel became a nuclear power "although it never admitted this, and the United States winked at it." It was more than winking. Congressional legislation signed into law by President Carter more than a quarter-century ago restricted the US from granting foreign aid to any country that developed nuclear weapons. If Washington acknowledges that Israel has indeed developed such weapons—its nuclear arsenal is numbered in the hundreds—the more than $3 billion of foreign aid annually provided to Israel in the past quarter-century would have been contrary to federal law. That's why the United States can't acknowledge Israel's nuclear arsenal.

Wallerstein also asserts, "The Oslo Accord on Israel-Palestine fell apart, despite all the energy Clinton put into fulfilling it." The only energy Clinton needed to expend was on a frank discussion with Israel re the consequences of his publicly acknowledging Israel's nuclear arsenal.

NORMAN BALABANIAN

WALLERSTEIN REPLIES

Paris

■ I had expected that the one part of my article to which many *Nation* readers would take exception was the part about nuclear proliferation. Nuclear weapons are a horrible thing. And I would certainly favor an international treaty making their first use illegal under any and all circumstances. I doubt that even a post-Bush Democratic administration would sign that, but I'd certainly sign a petition in favor of it.

The fact is, however, that there are now eight countries we know to have nuclear weapons: the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and probably North Korea as well. There are many others who are in the process or could rapidly be in the process of producing them. I do not trust a single one of them not to use them. I do not trust them more than the putative proliferators, furthermore. And I do think that what kept chemical weapons from being used in World War II and nuclear weapons in the Korean and Vietnam wars was fear of retaliation, not virtue.

It is not a question of "giving up." It is not a prudent or moral thing to preach to Third World nations that they shouldn't have weapons that others have because we're somehow afraid that they, more than us, will use them irresponsibly. So, I repeat, I'm for forbidding their use, treaties to diminish their number and anything else along these lines, provided it's balanced. But I'm against the idea that the big boys can have them but not the others. It's not a basis on which to build a peaceful and equitable world.

I agree with Norman Balabanian that the word "winked" is perhaps too weak. I'd be willing to say "colluded." Of course, if the United States changed its entire policy toward Israel, things would change in the region. But I'm not sure that Barak would have made more concessions at the time. Apart from his own views, he didn't have the political support in Israel at that moment for a real peace arrangement.

IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN

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COMMENT

(Continued From Page 7)

to be Hillary Clinton's "worst nightmare." He joined a large field of Republicans seeking this seat, a group that now includes former Housing Secretary Mel Martinez, former US Representative Bill McCollum, Florida House speaker Johnnie Byrd, former US Senator Bob Smith, State Senator Daniel Webster and businessman Doug Gallagher. In a recent poll, Klayman was at 4 percent.

In the first three months of Klayman's campaign, he raised $610,555, mostly through direct-mail fundraising conducted by Viguerie's American Target Advertising, according to Federal Election Commission records. In this period Klayman paid ATA $577,358. That is, the revenue barely covered the direct-mail cost—not good news for any campaign. And a report prepared in late January by ATA noted that the Klayman campaign had sent out slightly more than 1 million pieces at a cost of $730,315 and brought in $703,155.

Viguerie was using an assortment of conservative mailing lists, yet Klayman was scoring reasonably well mainly with those from Judicial Watch, according to ATA records. These Judicial Watch lists, though, were several years old, and mailing lists tend to deteriorate quickly. Klayman's direct-mail program could not rely on the older lists. One obvious answer was to rent Judicial Watch's up-to-date lists. Sources familiar with the campaign say Klayman told campaign workers he had tried that, unsuccessfully. (Tom Fitton, Judicial Watch's current president, denies Klayman made such a request.) But in search of a productive mailing list, Klayman, according to a lawsuit filed against him by a former campaign employee, also came up with an unorthodox remedy.

In December Paul Jensen, that former campaign aide, sued Klayman, charging him with slander. In his complaint, Jensen says that he quit the campaign because Klayman would not pay him and that after he threatened to sue Klayman for back pay, Klayman paid him but then told others Jensen had stolen from the campaign. The complaint also maintains that Klayman—who has called himself a Jew who believes in Christ—told a *Palm Beach Post* reporter he was Jewish but informed prominent Christian conservatives he was a Christian, and that Klayman instructed Jensen "to lie, if the subject came up, about the fact that Klayman had recently been divorced from his wife." Another person close to the campaign says Klayman told campaign aides to avoid mentioning his divorce and that campaign workers discussed among themselves Klayman's practice of offering different descriptions of his religious beliefs.

In his complaint, Jensen claims that in September he went with Klayman to a conference in Colorado Springs of the Council for National Policy, an organization of prominent conservatives. According to Jensen, four wealthy conservatives—William Ball Jr., Stuart Epperson, Dick Bott and Rich Bott—were attending the conference, and Klayman "was prevailing upon [them] to loan one million dollars each to American Target Advertising for its use to fund a direct-mail campaign to benefit Klayman's candidacy."

Jensen declines to talk about the loan or anything Klayman-connected, citing his ongoing case against Klayman, who has asked a federal court to dismiss Jensen's lawsuit. But with $1 million or more, Viguerie could test-mail various right-wing lists and craft a more effective list for the Klayman campaign.

I called Ball, an Indianapolis-based businessman and board member of the Center for Scientific Creation, and asked if Klayman had urged him to lend $1 million to Viguerie for use in developing a direct-mail list for Klayman's campaign. Ball replied, "Yeah." He said he discussed this with Klayman at the Council for National Policy meeting. He added, "I've known Richard [Viguerie] for many years. If I had the funds, I would do it. I'm still hoping I can do it." But, Ball said, a recent dispute with a bank had left him short of funds. He noted he'd sent Klayman a check for $600. "It's the best I can do at the time," he said. I also reached Dick Bott, founder and president of a Christian radio network. Did Klayman ask him to kick in $1 million? "I cannot confirm or deny that," he said. "I've talked to Larry Klayman several times, and I think he may have, but I'm involved in my other projects."

In an October 2 letter to Richard Scaife—written days after Klayman had lunch with him—Klayman referred to a loan idea. First he laid out his master plan. "As a senator," he wrote, "I will have considerable powers that I did not have at Judicial Watch, including the ability to investigate and prosecute in the Senate Hillary Clinton much like Richard Nixon did with the communist spy Alger Hiss.... if I am someday to run for president, I need the credentials to do so; being a senator will provide me with this. If not this year, Hillary Clinton obviously will run for the presidency in 2008. I plan to oppose her, God be willing." Then he made a pitch: "Dick, once again I need your help to achieve this goal. As explained, I left Judicial Watch without resources and must rely on direct mail to raise the monies to challenge my millionaire opponents. If you know of someone or some entity that can finance the direct mail firm, by providing a loan with an 18 percent return on investment, I would be most grateful." A Scaife spokesperson maintains that Scaife never received this letter. "He has not given one dime to Mr. Klayman's campaign," she adds, "and in fact he discouraged him from running."

Would it be legal for a Senate candidate to solicit a loan for his or her direct-mail house? I called several lawyers who specialize in campaign law and described the situation to them without mentioning Klayman's name or the identities or political affiliations of anyone involved. Joseph Sandler, a former general counsel to the Democratic Party, said, "I think that it is clearly illegal." A Senate candidate, he explained, is allowed to borrow money only from a bank or from him- or herself. If a candidate solicits a loan of this sort specifically to help his campaign, Sandler said, that would violate federal campaign law. Contributors can only donate up to $2,000 to a primary campaign. Providing $1 million in working capital to a vendor for a campaign could be seen as an in-kind donation that far exceeds the $2,000 limit. Two other lawyers specializing in election law—both of whom asked not to be named—shared Sandler's legal opinion. "This seems like a way to get around the rules," one said. "It seems like a violation to me."

How does it seem to Klayman and Viguerie? Did they nab a million-dollar loan? Neither man responded to multiple requests for comment. And by the way, Klayman, as of this writing, had not filed his personal financial-disclosure form with the Senate, as candidates must do within thirty days of entering a Senate race. Failure to submit this form can result in an $11,000 penalty. The Judicial Watch motto is "Because no one is above the law!" Is that the watchword of Klayman's campaign?

DAVID CORN

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Deciding Vote

ERIC FONER

CENTENNIAL CRISIS: The Disputed Election of 1876.
By William H. Rehnquist.
Knopf. 274 pp. $26.

According to the Constitution, the President, with the consent of the Senate, selects the members of the Supreme Court. Twice in American history, however, Supreme Court Justices have chosen the President. The first occasion was in 1877, when five Justices served on the fifteen-member Electoral Commission charged with determining the outcome of the disputed contest between Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican Governor of Ohio, and Samuel J. Tilden, the Democratic Governor of New York. Justice Joseph Bradley cast the deciding vote that made Hayes President. In 2000, of course, five Justices, in *Bush v. Gore*, ordered Florida to halt the recount of ballots, allowing state officials to certify that George W. Bush had carried the state and won the presidency. In both cases, William Rehnquist notes rather coyly in his new book, "there was profound dissatisfaction with the process on the part of the losing parties."

Rehnquist, of course, is the Chief Justice of the United States who supplied one of the five votes that made Bush President. He is an unusual jurist who reads and writes history, the author of books on civil liberties in wartime and impeachments in American history. In *Centennial Crisis*, the Chief Justice turns his attention to the electoral controversy of 1876–77. Unfortunately, this brief, curious work adds nothing to readily available accounts of its subject. The scholarship on which Rehnquist relies is almost entirely out of date and his grasp of the complex issues of the Reconstruction era tenuous. But if *Centennial Crisis* has little value as history, it offers a revealing glimpse into the mind of the Chief Justice. For essentially, the book is an elaborate, although indirect, apologia for the Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore* and a defense of Supreme Court Justices who help to resolve extrajudicial controversies.

Few eras of American history have undergone as sweeping a reinterpretation by historians in the past forty years as Reconstruction, the turbulent period that followed the Civil War. Once viewed as the lowest point in the American saga, a time of rampant misgovernment by uneducated former slaves empowered by vindictive Radical Republicans, Reconstruction is now seen as a flawed but praiseworthy effort to construct an interracial democracy in the South on the ruins of slavery.

Unfortunately, Rehnquist ignores virtually all modern works on the era, including those that deal directly with the disputed election, not to mention relevant manuscript collections. David Lincove's comprehensive annotated bibliography of Reconstruction, published in 2000, lists twenty-seven books, articles and doctoral dissertations under the heading "Election of 1876," some of minor importance but many indispensable. Of these, Rehnquist cites only three. He relies most heavily on Paul Haworth's 1906 history of the election.

Although Centennial Crisis *has little value as history, it offers a revealing glimpse into the mind of its author, Chief Justice Rehnquist.*

Rehnquist offers colorful portraits of the two presidential candidates and members of the Court, although these add nothing to what can be found in any standard biographical encyclopedia. He sometimes wanders off into irrelevancy, as when he recounts an assault on Justice Stephen Field in the late 1880s in which Field's bodyguard killed the assailant. He gets facts wrong, as in his account of the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, which suggests that President Hayes refused to intervene and let the strike simply peter out. The President's diary entry

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after he sent troops to crush the uprising is more accurate: "The strikers have been put down by force."

More important, Rehnquist remains locked into an antiquated view of the Reconstruction era long abandoned by scholars. He wrongly claims that Andrew Johnson tried to carry out Lincoln's "conciliatory approach" to Reconstruction only to be foiled by the Radical Republicans who dominated Congress. In fact, moderate Republicans, not Radicals, controlled Congress throughout Reconstruction, and Johnson's plan was very much his own, not simply a replica of Lincoln's. (On the eve of his death, Lincoln had called for limited black suffrage in the postwar South; Johnson was an inveterate racist.) What Rehnquist calls the Radicals' "Carthaginian Peace" (that is, the total subjugation of the defeated party by the victor after a war), involved the effort by moderate and Radical Republicans alike to devise ways of protecting the basic civil and political rights of the former slaves. That the Chief Justice of the United States sees national protection of blacks' rights as a punishment imposed on whites is disheartening.

Rehnquist's account of the years preceding the election of 1876 says almost nothing about the massive violence inflicted on black Southerners by the Ku Klux Klan and kindred groups. He attributes the Hamburg massacre of 1876, in which armed whites murdered a number of black South Carolinians, to "racial hostility," rather than recognizing it as part of a reign of terror aimed at overturning Reconstruction and restoring white supremacy. In other words, he offers no assessment of what was really at stake during the electoral crisis.

Much of *Centennial Crisis* consists of a detailed account of the formation and deliberations of the Electoral Commission, authorized by Congress to determine which candidate had carried South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, the states on which the presidency hinged. Both parties claimed to have won these states, and rival officials dispatched conflicting electoral vote returns to Washington. With the Constitution silent as to how to resolve the dispute, Congress in January 1877 established a commission consisting of five members of the House, five senators, and five Justices of the Supreme Court. Four of the Justices were named in the bill, and they were directed to choose the fifth, expected to be David Davis, a political independent. But in the midst of the crisis, the Illinois legislature elected Davis to the US Senate. Justice Joseph Bradley, a Republican, took his place on the Electoral Commission. With the other members evenly divided between the two parties, Bradley became the "casting vote" in a series of 8-to-7 rulings that gave the disputed states to Hayes and made him President.

Rehnquist narrates these events clearly, but fails to probe beneath the surface of events to explain the complex situation that developed or to interpret it effectively. He does not describe how divisions within the two parties and growing pressure from business interests for a settlement led to the establishment of the commission in the first place. He offers no explanation for Davis's election to the Senate, leaving the reader to wonder whether it was engineered by Democrats more interested in power in Congress than Tilden's election, or Republicans who wanted to get him off the Electoral Commission. He says almost nothing of the intense negotiations that took place outside the commission, in which Hayes's lieutenants, leading Southern Democrats, and various railroad interests hammered out a deal involving the abandonment of Reconstruction.

Rehnquist hails the 'bargain of 1877,' which ended Reconstruction and soon led to Jim Crow, for averting 'serious disturbance.'

This "bargain of 1877" provided that Democrats, who controlled the House of Representatives, would not try to obstruct Hayes's inauguration; Hayes would recognize Democratic control of the disputed Southern states; the basic rights of the former slaves would be guaranteed; and federal aid would be extended to a Southern railroad. The deal turned out to be far more important in its long-term consequences than whether Hayes or Tilden became President. It ended an era when the federal government sought to protect the rights of black citizens. And since Southern Democrats soon reneged on their pledge to respect blacks' constitutional rights, it marked the beginning of the long descent into segregation and disenfranchisement.

"The Negro," this magazine commented soon after Hayes's inauguration, "will disappear from the field of national politics. Henceforth the nation, as a nation, will have nothing more to do with him." The editors of *The Nation*, like most white Americans of that era, rejoiced in the abandonment of Reconstruction. Chief Justice Rehnquist praises the members of the Electoral Commission for enabling the country to avoid "serious disturbance" and go "about its business." He says nothing of the cost of the settlement, which did much to shape the racial system of the United States in the decades that followed.

With one eye on the Court's actions in 2000, Rehnquist ends his account by defending Justice Bradley against the "opprobrium" he endured for his "casting vote" that made Hayes President. He offers a brief survey of other instances when Supreme Court Justices have served the nation in "extrajudicial capacities." John Jay negotiated a treaty with Great Britain in 1794 while serving as Chief Justice. Justice Melville Fuller helped to arbitrate the Venezuela boundary dispute in 1897, Justice Owen Roberts headed the commission investigating the attack on Pearl Harbor and Chief Justice Earl Warren led the probe into the assassination of President Kennedy.

Interestingly, Rehnquist says nothing about the more explicitly partisan activities of Supreme Court Justices, of which examples abound. Justice John Catron enlisted the intervention of President-elect James Buchanan to persuade another member of the Court to side with the proslavery majority in the Dred Scott decision of 1857. President Franklin Roosevelt regularly conferred with Justice Louis Brandeis on political matters, as did Lyndon Johnson with Justice Abe Fortas. These instances seem more relevant to the behavior of the Justices in 1877 and 2000 than the Venezuela boundary question. In both cases, members of the Supreme Court made political decisions.

Actually, the outcome in *Bush v. Gore* seems far less defensible than the actions of the Electoral Commission. In 1877 Justice Bradley concluded that the commission could not possibly conduct its own detailed inquiry into local election returns and thus had no choice but to accept the findings of local election boards (all Republican) as to who had carried their states. Bradley's position, as Rehnquist argues, was certainly "reasonable." Unlike his successors in 2000, Bradley did not invent a new constitutional principle (equal procedures in the counting of ballots) to reach a predetermined verdict and then add that this principle applied only in the specific case at hand. Bradley seems to have tried to rise above the immediate political situation, unlike Justice Antonin Scalia, who in 2000 insisted that the Court needed to insure "public acceptance" of a Bush presidency. It is unlikely that Bradley would have gone duck-hunting with a litigant before the Court.

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Rehnquist acknowledges that the Justices who accepted assignment to the Electoral Commission in 1877 "may have tarnished the reputation of the Court." This book will do nothing to rehabilitate the reputations of the five Justices, including Rehnquist himself, irreparably "tarnished" by their actions in 2000. ■

The Three-State Solution?

JUAN COLE

INVENTING IRAQ: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied.
By Toby Dodge. Columbia. 260 pp. $24.95.

THE FUTURE OF IRAQ: Dictatorship, Democracy, or Division?
By Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield. Palgrave/Macmillan. 260 pp. $24.95.

All nations are modern inventions, but those fashioned in the Middle East show their scaffolding more than most. Iraq was cobbled together as an odd hybrid of colony and monarchy in 1921 by the British Empire for its own purposes, with no attention to the desires of its inhabitants. Like many states established by colonial powers, Iraq was ethnically diverse, encompassing Shiite and Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Jews and Christians. The relationship of the Kurdish areas to the central government was particularly troubled. For the most part, Iraq has been ruled by a Sunni Arab strongman, often backed or quietly supported by foreign powers.

The Anglo-American overthrow of Saddam Hussein last spring has raised anew, in some minds, not only the question of Iraq's future but of its past—indeed, of its very identity as a nation-state. Some Iraqis, notably Kurdish leaders and intellectuals like Kanan Makiya, have called for a loose "federalism" in which the Kurds would enjoy considerable autonomy. A number of influential Western observers, such as Leslie Gelb at the Council on Foreign Relations, have gone so far as to suggest that Iraq be divided—by fiat of the Western powers, it seems—into three states. According to advocates of the "three-state solution," Iraq is an artificial construct and can thus be jettisoned, as if the last eighty-four years in which Iraqis have lived together can simply be ignored, not to mention the desire of most Iraqis to remain in a unitary state.

Two new books take up the question of Iraq's founding. Toby Dodge's *Inventing Iraq* is a study of the British administration of Iraq, while Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield's *The Future of Iraq* assesses the effort to rebuild Iraq after Saddam. Both examine the roots of Iraq's history of despotism and foreign intervention, and both consider the likely impact of the 2003 Anglo-American invasion on the country's future.

Iraq's lopsided polity, as Dodge underscores, can be traced back to the policies of the Ottoman Empire, which captured Baghdad in 1534 and which favored a Sunni elite. After the British conquered Iraq during World War I, they reinforced these oligarchical tendencies. They did so out of necessity. At first, British imperialists like Sir Henry Dobbs envisaged Britain's civil service ruling Iraq. In contrast, many Iraqis hoped for an independent state, on the model of the one declared by the Hashemite leader Faisal from Damascus. The League of Nations announced a British Mandate in Iraq at San Remo in the spring of 1920.

Some 100,000 disappointed Iraqis, led by Shiite and Sunni clerics, tribal chieftains and small-town notables, united in a massive anti-British revolt. The British brutally put it down from the air, slaughtering 9,000 Iraqis, both insurgents and civilians, and employing poison gas for the first time in Iraq. In the aftermath, London realized that it could not hope to rule the country by fiat, and that it needed a proxy government. Around the same time, Faisal was expelled from Damascus by the invading French (the British had double-booked Syria, promising it both to the Hashemites of Mecca and to Paris). Having a spare king now, the British installed him as monarch in Baghdad in 1921. Faisal, a Sunni Arab from the Hijaz in western Arabia, had no natural constituency in Iraq. He reached out to the old Ottoman-Iraqi Sunni elite to staff the upper reaches of his new government and the officer corps. Although occasionally a Shiite gained a high post, the dominance of the Sunni Arab minority was assured.

In *Inventing Iraq*, Dodge analyzes what he describes as the failure of British nation-building in the 1920s. He identifies two camps in the British civil administration of the country. One camp—what I call the J.R.R. Tolkien strain of British colonialism—consisted of romantics like Dobbs, who saw the countryside, its "gentry" and the tribes as the repository of all that was noble, and who distrusted the cities and their Westernizing effendis. The other group celebrated the virtues of the rational individual and sought to establish connections between such people and the state. On the whole, the devotees of romantic ruralism won out, seeking to rule Iraq through the tribal sheiks. Dodge, ever attentive to ironies, points out that the British thereby profoundly changed the position of the supposedly "untainted" sheiks and made them conduits of colonial administration. He neglects to mention that changes in Ottoman land-tenure laws and reformed Ottoman administration had already effected substantial changes in the role of the sheiks in the seventy-five years before the British arrived. Nor does he sufficiently underline the ways British policy reversed the Ottoman attempts to sideline the sheiks in favor of rationalized bureaucracy.

The British used their power to recognize sheiks as a way of rewarding the cooperative, and of punishing those unwilling or unable to keep their clans in line. Where administrators perceived a clan as unruly, they decertified them as tribes and seized their lands, giving them to others. The British were faced then, as the Americans are now, with ruling a huge territory on the cheap because of the disillusionment of the postwar public. To compensate for lack of troops, they relied on air power, conducting bombing raids from the sky against tribes that rebelled or refused to pay taxes. The airplane also allowed a close surveillance of the population in a manner that the supposedly despotic predecessors of the British, the Ottomans, could never have dreamed of achieving. This aspect of British rule in Iraq has long been understood by, among others, the eminent historian of Iraq Peter Sluglett. In his 1976 study, *Britain in Iraq*, Sluglett quotes Member of Parliament Leopold Amery as saying, "If the writ of King Faisal runs effectively through his kingdom, it is entirely due to the British airplanes."

Yet, as Dodge points out, the airplane

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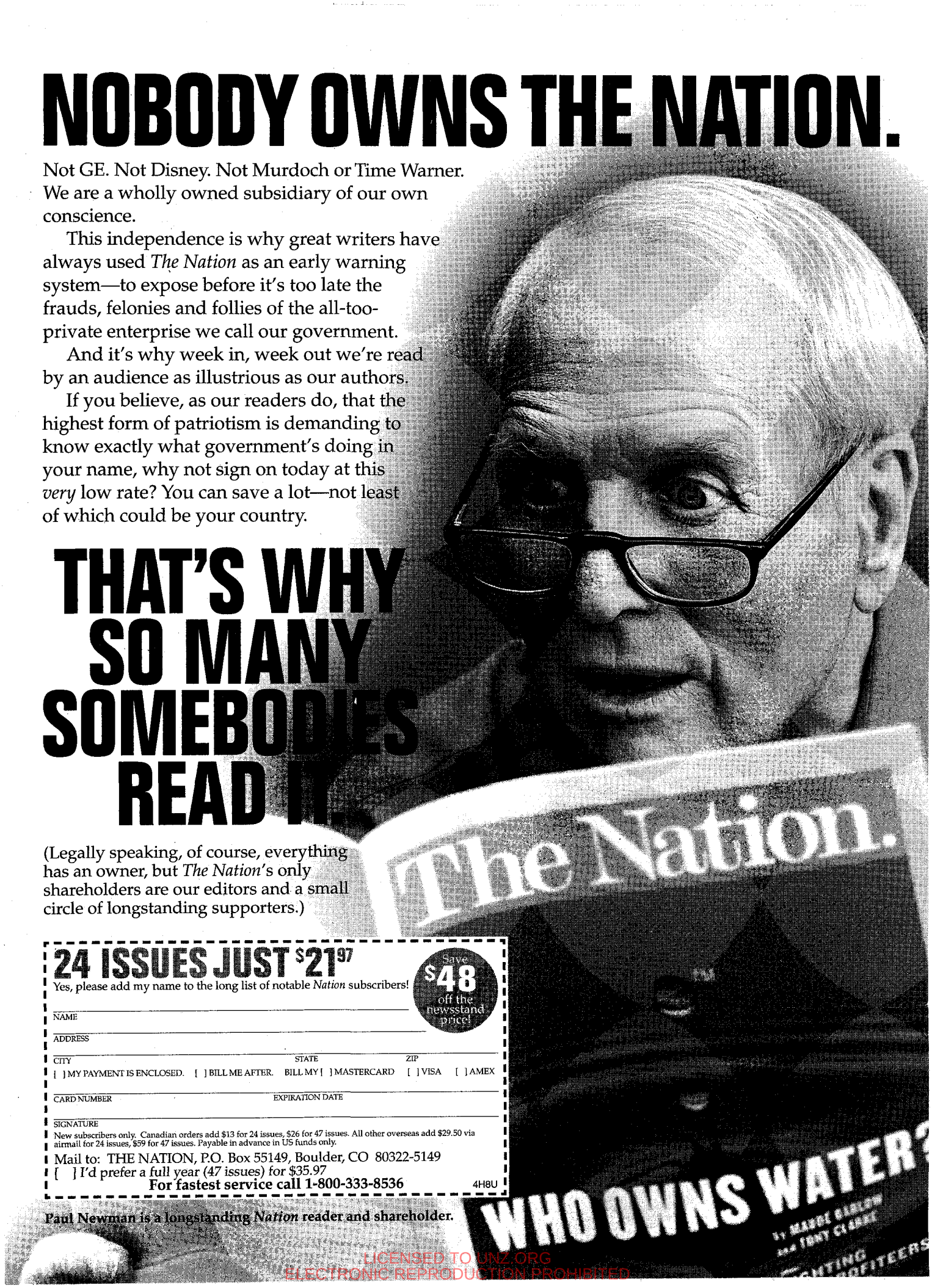

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quickly demonstrated its limits, in large part because it depended on raw power and fear rather than on legitimate authority. The British used night bombing and incendiary explosives to destroy villages around Samawah in 1923 as a means of forcing the population to surrender its rifles and submit. While the destruction of six villages and the killing of 100 men, women and children terrified the peasants, they simply dispersed from the area and took their rifles with them. The Royal Air Force high command considered following the fleeing Iraqis, but concluded that further bombing would only be a slaughter. According to Dodge, the high command feared that the British public would discover exactly how they were ruling Iraq. His points about the political limits of air power are well taken, but it should be remembered that after 1923 the number of bombing raids actually increased. At that point, Squadron Leader Arthur Harris (who is not mentioned in Dodge's index) invented the heavy bombing techniques he later practiced in Hamburg and Dresden.

Though a fine addition to the literature on the technologies of colonial control, Dodge's book has limitations. He cites no Arabic sources and thus often cannot challenge the accounts of Iraqis found in the British archives. In fairness, the Iraqis themselves are not Dodge's subject, which is rather the guiding ideologies of British administrators in Iraq. But a better understanding of Iraqi society itself might well have enabled him to understand and critique the colonial apparatus more incisively.

Likewise, Dodge offers few social statistics, so that one takes away from his book no sense of scale. He speaks of airplanes but never says how many were deployed in Iraq. He speaks of land tenure but tells us nothing about the size of the rural population or the changing distribution of landed wealth. The processes he discusses resulted by the late 1950s in a society where 70 percent of cultivable land was in the form of 3,400 large haciendas, 55 percent of which were in the hands of about 2,500 (mainly Sunni) individuals. Much of the rural population was landless by 1957. This highly unjust and unstable social structure owed a great deal to British policy, and helped plunge the country into crisis in 1958.

Although Dodge's book is largely confined to the British experience of ruling Iraq, it is not out of place to point out one important implication of his account for the Anglo-American invasion and occupation. It is that there are longstanding limits to the use of high-tech weaponry and air power in effectively ruling a conquered population, even in the task of counterinsurgency. As Dodge demonstrates, the British neglected to establish direct links between the state and the Iraqis, resorting instead to an incoherent mixture of high-tech bullying, blandishments and threats directed toward the rural elite. Contemptuous of the urban middle classes and distrustful of educated Iraqis, they favored precisely those social forces least interested in the nation and most interested in cultivating local tribal identities and in preserving unjust concentrations of property.

Despite the sometimes violent clashes between Iraqi Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, partition is not the answer to the country's problems.

In a similar fashion, the US-dominated Coalition Provisional Authority has attempted to rule Iraq by using communal and religious leaders and corrupt expatriate politicians—the modern analogues of the tribal chieftains of an earlier era. The interim Governing Council appointed by US civil administrator Paul Bremer last July was top-heavy with leaders of fundamentalist or radical Muslim organizations that had fought the Baath Party. Several of these religious figures belonged to revolutionary Shiite parties. Even one of the five Kurdish members is an Islamist, though fundamentalism has little support among the Kurds. Just as British policies reinvigorated tribalism, so the US emphasis on ruling Iraq through male religious and ethnic figures could well exacerbate religious and ethnic tensions down the road. The dangers inherent in rising communal tensions were recently illustrated by the terror bombings of Shiite holy cities, which took the lives of well over a hundred worshipers.

Would Iraqi Sunnis and Shiites and Kurds therefore be better off living in separate states? This proposal is advanced in *The Future of Iraq*, by the British writers Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield. Where Dodge's book is a work of scholarship, *The Future of Iraq* is an undisguised work of advocacy. We have seen a number of such books since the buildup to war—notably *The New Iraq* by Joseph Braude, an Iraqi-American business consultant who was arrested on his way back from Baghdad with stolen artifacts from the Iraqi National Museum—and we can expect more to come. Not that all these books concur with one another. Just as officials of the British Empire clashed over how to rule Iraq, so do American policymakers today.

Anderson and Stansfield's narrative of modern Iraqi history casts a glance at the descent of the country after independence in 1932 into military dictatorships that alternated with reactionary civilian governments in the service of the large landlords. Anderson and Stansfield shortchange the brief rule of Brig. Abdel Karim Qassim, who came to power in the 1958 coup that overthrew the monarchy, painting him as a do-nothing leader. In fact, Qassim finally enacted land reform and protected workers' rights, becoming enormously popular and launching an epochal change in Iraq's social structure. They do get right the rapid rise of the Communist Party in the 1950s and early '60s (though they underestimate its numbers) and the challenge it posed to Qassim, who responded by letting party members into his Cabinet.

Unfortunately, Anderson and Stansfield are so focused on internal Iraqi politics that they ignore the evidence, reported over a decade ago by Adel Darwish and Gregory Alexander in their 1991 book, *Unholy Babylon*, that Washington was extremely alarmed by Qassim and the Communists, and therefore wooed the Baath Party as an alternative. When the Baath briefly came to power in 1963, the CIA passed to Saddam Hussein, probably an agency asset, a list of hundreds of Iraqi Communists, whom the new regime liquidated. The Baath was in the wilderness when the coup collapsed, but came back to stay in 1968. Again, Darwish and Alexander report assertions of US backing for the 1968 coup, confirmed to me by other journalists who have talked to retired CIA and State Department officials. This Great Power context for Iraqi events of the 1960s is not discussed in *The Future of Iraq*, although Anderson and Stansfield do present a workmanlike survey of Baath rule from 1968: the familiar story of oil wealth, industrialization and rising prosperity in the 1970s, followed by more than two decades of serial disaster under Saddam Hussein's presidency.

Throughout, they emphasize ethnic tensions rather than social cleavages, such as class conflict or divisions between the city and countryside. This emphasis serves their dubious argument that Iraq would be better off if it were partitioned, a plan that at the least ignores the way the country's various ethnic and religious groups are intermixed and intermarried. While ethnicity is certainly a burning issue in contemporary Iraq,

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its importance has been artificially inflated by Baath policies. When the largely Sunni Arab civilian wing of the party came to power in 1968, it distributed the petroleum wealth and other perquisites to Sunni members of the ruling elite, especially those from Saddam's home base in Tikrit. Shiites filled lower-level posts in the south, but Sunnis dominated the top posts and funneled resources to a Sunni Arab sect-class of *rentiers*.

Shut out of the circle of patronage, non-Sunni Iraqis had to find bases on which to mobilize. They could not form secular parties that might try to appeal across ethnic cleavages on economic issues. The regime's relentless surveillance forced them to turn inward, to family, clan and the mosque. As a result, Shiite movements were able to organize clandestinely in ghettos and among settled tribes in the late Saddam period to make preparations for an Islamic state. Likewise, the longstanding yearning of many Kurds for more autonomy from Baghdad was intensified by the Baath regime's horrifying poison gas attacks in reprisal for the Kurds' support of Iran in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88). The Kurdish movement for autonomy was reinforced by the no-fly zone established to protect them from Saddam after his troops defeated the 1991 revolt, which the Americans encouraged and shortly afterward abandoned, leaving thousands of rebels to be slaughtered by Saddam's troops.

With regard to the Iraqi Kurds, Anderson and Stansfield regrettably fall into the trap of primordialist thinking. That is, they assume that ethnicity (and its political saliency) is a given, rather than something actively fashioned by society. There is, of course, no denying that the Kurds have suffered grievously; they have as much right to imagine themselves into a nation as anyone else. But they did not start out as a nation, just as no one else did. The major dialects of Kurdish (an Indo-European language) are not mutually comprehensible. Many Iraqi Kurds are bilingual in Arabic, and many live in mixed provinces and intermarry with other Iraqis. If Iraq remains a multiethnic state, it would hardly be alone in the world—or even in the region (think of Iran, Turkey, Syria, Israel, Pakistan and Algeria, among others). Of course, some of those who favor breaking up Iraq into its constituent "ethnic" components also favor an ethnically pure Israel, cleansed of Palestinians.

Anderson and Stansfield believe that a long US occupation has a better chance

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of resulting in democracy, and a short occupation is more likely to produce authoritarianism or ethnic conflict. They are deeply skeptical that the US public will put up with a long occupation that would involve a constant stream of body bags coming back to the States. The best hope for both a reasonably quick US exit and a viable democracy, they believe, lies in a partition of the country, either into an independent Kurdistan and an Arab "Mesopotamia," or into three states, along the Kurdish, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab ethnic lines. Iraq, they argue, is an artificial nation, and the three states would reflect a more "natural" division of the territory.

Iraq's problems during the past eighty-four years cannot, however, be explained by calling it an artificial nation, and for all their divisions, most Iraqis are deeply opposed to partition, particularly one imposed by the US Army. Even if it were not the case that all nations are, in some sense, artificial, it is hard to see how "naturalness" or the lack thereof has driven any major political movements. Nor is Iraq's modern history particularly short compared with its neighbors, which achieved their independence from the 1920s to the 1940s. The argument may refer to the coexistence of Kurds and Arabs in the same state, but then most countries are multicultural, myths of national unity notwithstanding. Iraq's problems have for the most part derived from the extreme concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a succession of minority cliques—a state of affairs that the Americans may be in the process of fostering once again by their extreme economic liberalization policies.

Unfortunately, Anderson and Stansfield do not survey the full range of implications of their proposal. No major indigenous Iraqi political party or actor favors partition. Even the Kurds want a loose federalism. Turkey has threatened to go to war to prevent the emergence of an oil-rich independent Kurdistan, which its leaders fear might entice the Turkish Kurds of eastern Anatolia into a separatism that would fragment Turkey. The Iranians less truculently maintain a similar view, because of sensitivities about their own Kurdish minority.

It is not even clear that an independent Kurdistan in the rugged north is economically viable, assuming that the rest of Iraq does not quietly yield to them Kirkuk's petroleum wellheads or, indeed, the city of Kirkuk itself, which does not have a Kurdish majority. Those wellheads are, in any case, old and being depleted, and the future of Iraqi petroleum lies in the south. An independent Kurdistan could well be doomed as a poor, landlocked country with declining oil revenues.

Likewise, the Saudis are terrified of an Arab Shiite state in southern Iraq, given that they have a significant Shiite majority in their nearby Eastern Province. This province, al-Hasa, is where the Saudi petroleum is, and the Shiites provide many of the workers on the oil rigs. The Wahhabi Saudis, hyper-Sunnis, largely despise Shiites and do not want theirs becoming uppity. A partition opposed to the death by Iraq's three wealthiest and most powerful neighbors seems destined to fail. Moreover, it probably would not be good for Iraqis to be reduced to a set of small, weak and in some cases poor countries. Nor is it clear that Iraqi democracy would be served by partition, as Anderson and Stansfield argue. The corporate solidarity along religious and ethnic lines visible in Sunni Arab Falluja or in Shiite Basra, which sometimes turns coercive or violent, is a less promising basis for democracy than a federal Iraq where parties will over time prosper best if they can find ways of appealing across ethnic boundaries.

The real danger facing working-class Iraqis, the vast majority of the country, is not that they will be forced to coexist with those who pray differently or speak different first languages. The most pressing threat is that the Bush Administration's economic shock therapy and other policies will create a new, small clique of robber barons who monopolize most of the country's resources. That is where we came in. ■

Labor Pains

JENNIFER NIESSLEIN

THE MOMMY MYTH: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women. By Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels. Free Press. 383 pp. $26.

When I took childbirth classes six years ago, the word "pressure" was bandied about an awful lot: We heard about the pressure on our bladders, the pressure applied to our backs to ease contractions, the pressure (oh, evil euphemism) we'd feel when it came time to push. As I read *The Mommy Myth*, it occurred to me that "pressure" had probably been a good word to get used to. According to the book's authors, the enormous, contradictory postpartum pressure "to become some hybrid between Mother Teresa, Donna Shalala, Martha Stewart and Cindy Crawford" is a fact of modern motherhood.

Cultural critics Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels call it the "new momism." Since the 1980s, mothers have been subjected to an increasingly ridiculous mythology of what a good mother does, and is. Cultural messages aimed at mothers, they say, tell us there is just one right way to mother; it involves much smiling and joy and serenity, and no questioning, ambivalence or frustration. In this "postfeminist" age, Douglas and Michaels, who raised their children in the 1970s and '80s, see cultural forces at work to "return women to the Stone Age":

> Here's the progression. Feminism won; you can have it all; of course you want children; mothers are better at raising children than fathers; of course your children come first; of course you come last; today's children need constant attention, cultivation, and adoration, or they'll become failures and hate you forever; you don't want to fail at that; it's easier for mothers to abandon their work and their dreams than for fathers; you don't want it all anymore (which is good because you can't have it all); who cares about equality, you're too tired; and whoops—here we are in 1954.

But unlike in 1954, we have the language of choice, a perversion of second-wave feminism. We chose to become mothers, we chose the workplace or the full-time caregiver role (and the often unsatisfying ways these roles have bound us), we chose to take that shower during which little Anna not only missed out on her synapse-building time with Mom but provoked the cat into scratching her cornea. All of it is the mother's responsibility alone, and she has to do it by herself. Something wrong with the system itself, you say? Need a little help? Loser.

Douglas and Michaels insist that it wasn't always like this. In the early days of

Jennifer Niesslein is co-editor of Brain, Child: The Magazine for Thinking Mothers.

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the women's movement, they show that, for at least some feminists, mothers' issues were very much on the table. Feminist goals included measures like universal daycare and Social Security for housewives, and achieving them seemed possible at the time. But, as they imagine it, a secret society—the Committee for Retrograde Antifeminist Propaganda (CRAP)—sought to "rewrite the history of the women's movement and distort what feminists said and did."

Since then, new momism has been gaining currency in the United States, and let them tell you, it's everywhere: Contributors include the media's evergreen coverage of the "mommy wars" (fought mama-a-mama with all the real-world veracity of the WWE); sensational and unrepresentative news coverage of mothers and children; the toy industry; the celebrity-mom profile—a women's magazine staple; and the child-care expert establishment, starring, among others, Benjamin Spock, William Sears and Laura "I Am My Kid's (Judgmental, Scary, Right-Wing) Mom" Schlessinger.

Douglas and Michaels say that all this new momism sets up impossible and contradictory choices: If you're a good mother, you will emulate the celebrity moms, who effortlessly combine raising children (who always "come first") with fabulous careers, homes and marriages. Joy is the only acceptable emotion, self-sacrifice the only acceptable MO. If you're a bad mother, you will also see yourself in the media: in stories about crack babies; in coverage of women, like Susan Smith, who murder their children; in virtually every report about mothers on welfare. Viewers, see what horrible things will happen when mothers put their own interests—in these cases, an addiction, a boyfriend or an extra $60 a month—above those of their children?

And if you wonder where on the continuum you fall, you can be sure that the "national fixation" on dangers to children in the news—sexual abuse at daycare centers, kidnappings and other "trends" not statistically worthy of their coverage—will nudge you back on the straight and narrow. That is, toward both intensive mothering and a career that raises the GDP. Sound like a recipe for crazy-making? "Now here's the real beauty of this contorting contradiction," they write. "Both working mothers *and* stay-at-home mothers get to be failures."

The Mommy Myth is a fun read and a smart one, too. The deconstruction of *thirtysomething* alone is worth the price of the book. But Douglas and Michaels are at their best when they call attention—as they often do—to what a striking difference class makes in how mothers are portrayed in the media. Take Christie Brinkley, a veteran of the celebrity-mom profile:

> No impolite chiding here, à la the welfare mother, about three kids by three different men. Instead, Christie got to announce her satisfaction with her latest family formation on the cover of *McCall's*, "I finally got it right."

(An issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* reported that Brinkley's third child was her "anchor, a midlife miracle well worth waiting for," which the authors note "must have made her first child feel really special.") Thanks to momism, the gulf between celebrity mothers and welfare mothers has grown, the authors write. "We rarely read about these very different mothers in the same publication, or even [consider] them as members of the same species."

Douglas and Michaels also tease out the real-world implications of media coverage, especially for poor mothers. "The news may not succeed in telling us what to think," they write, "but it does succeed in telling us what to think about: This is called agenda setting." In the late 1980s and early '90s the news pounded home images of women on welfare straight out of a racist stereotype, which led to welfare "reform," which in turn led to a good percentage of formerly dependent families still living at poverty-level...with no insurance, hungry and even homeless. Another example: False scares about the dangers of daycare—Is that nice grandmotherly type a member of a Satanist pornography ring? Won't Johnny become "aggressive" if he goes to preschool?—ground down the once-possible dream of government-sponsored daycare.

I wonder, though, whether Douglas and Michaels might ultimately wind up preaching to the choir. *The Mommy Myth*'s prose—witty, engaging and backed by a lot of research—also tends toward hyperbole. With ideas as important as theirs, I longed for some of the serious reportage with long endnotes that, say, Ann Crittenden brought to her excellent 2001 book *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*, an economic analysis that laid out the many ways in which caregivers get financially punished. In it, the facts piled up and practically spoke for themselves.

Douglas and Michaels are old-school feminists, and while their perspective is refreshing (of the cut-the-CRAP variety), some of the parenting practices they target will undoubtedly put certain readers on the defensive. Take the subject of homeschooling: While Douglas and Michaels

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acknowledge that for some families it may be the best or only educational choice, the reader walks away with the impression that women who home-school are chumps who've bought into the new momism and its ideal of intensive, round-the-clock mothering. Ditto co-sleeping (i.e., having the whole family pile in one bed), baby-wearing (carrying around the kid in a sling) and "sequencing" (consciously reducing your paid employment to caregive more). The catfight between working and at-home mothers is imaginary, but the tension mothers feel over caregiving is real. Maybe the new momism has created a certain touchiness, or maybe it's just that nobody likes to be thought a fool, but I cringed to think of the letters the authors will be receiving from attachment-parenting dogmatists, who follow to the letter every single message of this "natural" parenting movement, in which parent-child bonding reigns supreme. (I should know—a year after the fact, I'm still fielding angry letters to the editor regarding a piece my magazine published criticizing Dr. Sears, the godfather of attachment parenting). I cringed more to think of the mothers who will quietly write off *The Mommy Myth* as an attack on them and what are, in the end, pretty innocuous parenting choices.

The Mommy Myth ends with a fantasy, where the new momism is "exorcised." The exorcism begins when mothers nationwide denounce it. I think they used to call this sort of thing "consciousness raising," and it is actually happening, although slowly and without a groovy 1970s soundtrack. Douglas and Michaels point out a few loosenings in the momism straitjacket in *The Mommy Myth*, but I'd say we're further along than they think. The "momoir" publishing boom has given us at least a shelf full of honest, warts-and-all portrayals of motherhood. Some of the old-style service magazines like *Working Mother* and *Family Fun* have started (in sections, anyway) to come back to mothers' reality, and there is a wave of new mother-centric, anti-momism websites and zines, notably the Mothers Movement Online (www.mothersmovement.org). A few groups have started to advocate for mothers' rights, like the Crittenden-founded group Mothers Ought to Have Equal Rights (MOTHERS) and Mothers & More. Small victories are declared every once in a while. Granted, in this political climate, the legislative stuff is a slow go. But that's the thing about pressure—to relieve it, you have to push back. ■

IN BRIEF

I Confess (Sort of)

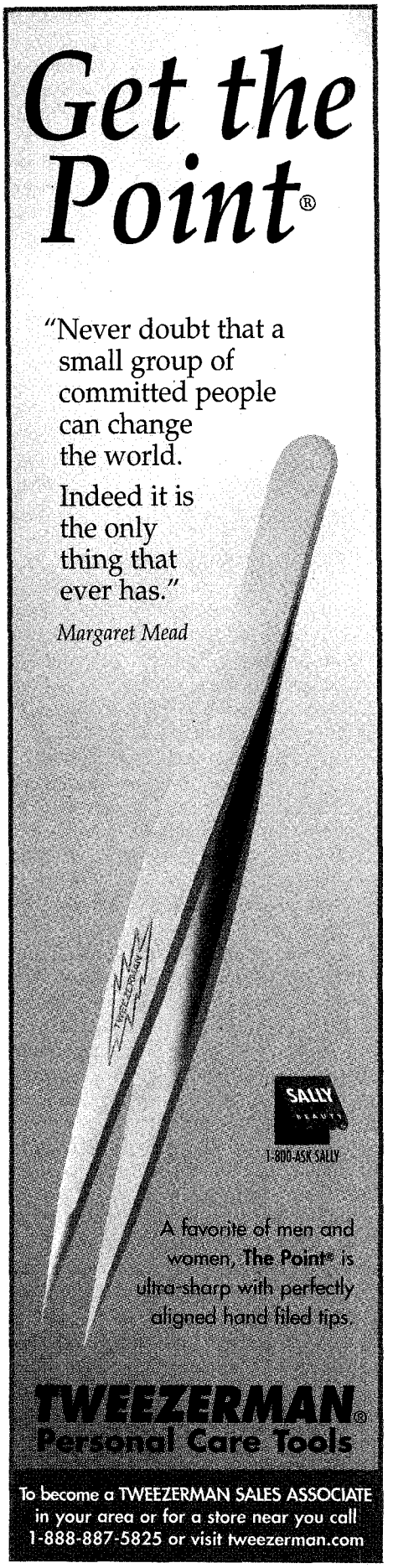
KATE LEVIN

BY NIGHT IN CHILE. By Roberto Bolaño. New Directions. 130 pp. $13.95.

A confession is, by definition, a declaration of guilt. To confess is to disclose one's sins and open oneself to judgment; a difficult undertaking, sure, but one that (in theory, at least) is ultimately rewarded with forgiveness, a clear conscience, a mind at ease. If so, Father Sebastián Urrutia, the narrator of Roberto Bolaño's arresting historical novel *By Night in Chile*, makes a most unusual confessor. "There are a couple of points that have to be cleared up," he begins his deathbed ramble. It soon becomes clear that the confession into which the half-delirious Chilean priest has launched—snaking through the novel's 130 pages in a single labyrinthine paragraph—is less an admission of guilt than a guilt-ridden self-defense, alternately defiant and desperate in tone. Father Urrutia's monologue encircles his sin without ever naming it: complicity in the murderous dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Bolaño, an acclaimed and prolific Chilean author who published nine novels, two short-story collections and five books of poetry before succumbing to liver failure last year at age 50, experienced Pinochet's repression firsthand. In 1973 Bolaño returned to his native Chile from Mexico, where his family had moved several years earlier, to "help build socialism" under President Salvador Allende. Within a month of his repatriation, a military junta toppled Allende, installed Pinochet as leader and imprisoned

Kate Levin, a writer living in Brooklyn, is a former Nation *intern.*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thousands of pro-democracy Allendistas, including 20-year-old Bolaño.

Years later, the notoriously wry Bolaño would downplay his experience as a political prisoner, exhibiting what Chris Andrews (who translated *By Night in Chile* into English) has described as his gift for "corrosive, self-mocking humor." In a 1999 interview with the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*, Bolaño deflected a question about his imprisonment, saying, "Those were monstrously happy days." To a follow-up question about the role of Chilean writers in Pinochet's coup—were they resisters or collaborators?—Bolaño's answer was similarly sardonic, at once evasive and blunt: "I prefer not to give my opinion on that because I'm afraid it would be extremely cruel...and I don't feel like being cruel this afternoon. Let's just say that the role Chilean writers played at that moment left much to be desired."

Which brings us back to Father Urrutia, a man of letters as well as of the cloth. Like most collaborators, Bolaño's priest is not a particularly political animal. A solipsist and a misanthrope, Father Urrutia doesn't much care what shape society is in, as long as it doesn't interfere with his lifelong ambition: to nestle among Chile's literary elite as a renowned poet and critic. Father Urrutia's half-hearted attempts at ministry only intensify his superciliousness, to darkly comic effect. "Someone was talking to me about a sick child," he recalls, "but with such poor diction I couldn't tell if the child was sick or dead already. What did they need me for?"

To his chagrin, Father Urrutia's blissful existence among the literary cognoscenti is rudely interrupted by the political upheaval of 1960s–70s Chile. When Allende is elected president, Urrutia distracts himself from the sweeping social change by re-reading the Greek classics—plunging headlong into ancient history to drown out the alarming sound of his fellow Chileans taking to the streets. In the novel's finest passage, Urrutia's anxiety gives way to frenzy as he recounts Allende's dynamic three years in power. Urrutia pendulates between past and present ("I started with Homer...and then a pro-Allende general was killed"), literature and reality ("and I read Tyrtaios of Sparta... and the government nationalized the copper mines"), before breathing a sigh of relief at Pinochet's coup d'état: "peace at last." With the restoration of order, he is finally free to pursue his beloved art without the intrusion of politics.

Or so he imagines. Soon Father Urrutia is tapped (by colleagues from Opus Dei, the secretive Catholic organization with historic ties to the Franco dictatorship in Spain) to give lessons on Marxism to Pinochet and the junta. Urrutia will also learn, after the fact, that the Santiago literary salon he frequented during Pinochet's rule doubled as an interrogation center, where political dissidents were routinely tortured in the basement by the hostess's husband as the literati hobnobbed overhead.

There is, *By Night in Chile* conveys powerfully, simply no such thing as neutrality when it comes to regimes like Pinochet's. When Father Urrutia is reluctant to tutor the junta, he is gently reminded by his Opus Dei recruiters that it is an offer no one can refuse. They own you, is the chilling lesson that Bolaño (whose short novel *Estrella Distante*, another dark tale of Pinochet-era opportunism, will soon be issued in English) imparts to us: Those who don't actively resist brutality are bound to serve it. The price of acquiescence, as our tormented narrator knows, is one's conscience. ■

FILMS

Adaptation

STUART KLAWANS

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST • STARSKY & HUTCH
JAMES'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM • BROKEN WINGS

So Mel Gibson has been persecuted all the way to the bank. *The Passion of the Christ*—undertaken by him as a work of faith, and promoted to the faithful as if he, too, were about to be killed by unbelievers—is a box-office smash, to which I have contributed my own $10.25. Yes, I have now watched the movie (a day after deadline pressure and an absence of press screenings forced me to write about it unseen, for our March 15 issue), and I have found it to be worse than expected.

It's worse, first of all, as filmmaking. From the opening scene of Jesus's agony in the garden, with its silent-movie head-tossing and chest-heaving, its slithering snake (evil is afoot!) and $2.98 clump of trees backlit in a dry-ice fog, Gibson directs down to the audience, as if presuming us to be bumpkins used to a diet of corn.

When Gibson wants to impress us with the decadence of Herod's court, he whips up a scene that poor, saintly Jack Smith might have titled "Sodomite Fleshpots of the Orient" (only Smith would have done it better and wouldn't have been serious). When Gibson wants to illustrate maternal love, he shows Mary running in slo-mo through the bosky light of a flashback, hurrying to comfort a toddler Jesus who has scraped his knee. (This greeting-card image pops into her head when her adult son, flayed raw, tumbles beneath the massive beams of the cross—a conjunction of events that proves the flashback to be not just trivial but superfluous. Doesn't Mary have enough on her mind already?) And when Gibson wants you to understand that certain characters are evil, he makes sure they're double ugly. In fact everything has to be doubled before Gibson will trust you to get the message. By my count, Jesus falls not three times but six on the way to Calvary. At the moment of his death, it's not enough for the veil in the Temple to be rent, as in the Bible; an earthquake has to rip a chasm right up to the altar.

Gibson practices the aesthetic of the lapel-puller, who congratulates you, in an ear-splitting bawl, for entering the sideshow he won't let you pass by. Perhaps you'll excuse this directorial style as an artistic sin and therefore (in American eyes) venial. Perhaps you'll be willing to excuse Gibson's sins against language, too. (The Aramaic that his characters speak was clearly learned by the actors by rote, so that it comes out as gibble-gabble. The actors' Latin, by contrast, is pretty good, apart from its being utterly un-Roman. What you hear is the Church Latin of Gibson's youth.) The aspect of the film that you might not excuse is Gibson's interpretation of the Gospels, an interpretation he has sought to talk out of existence (as I argued in a previous column) by insisting that he's been true to the Bible.

True to which parts of the Bible, selected according to what principle? To begin formulating the inconvenient answer, I note that Gibson has taken as his principal source the Gospel of John—by common consent the most philosophically elevated

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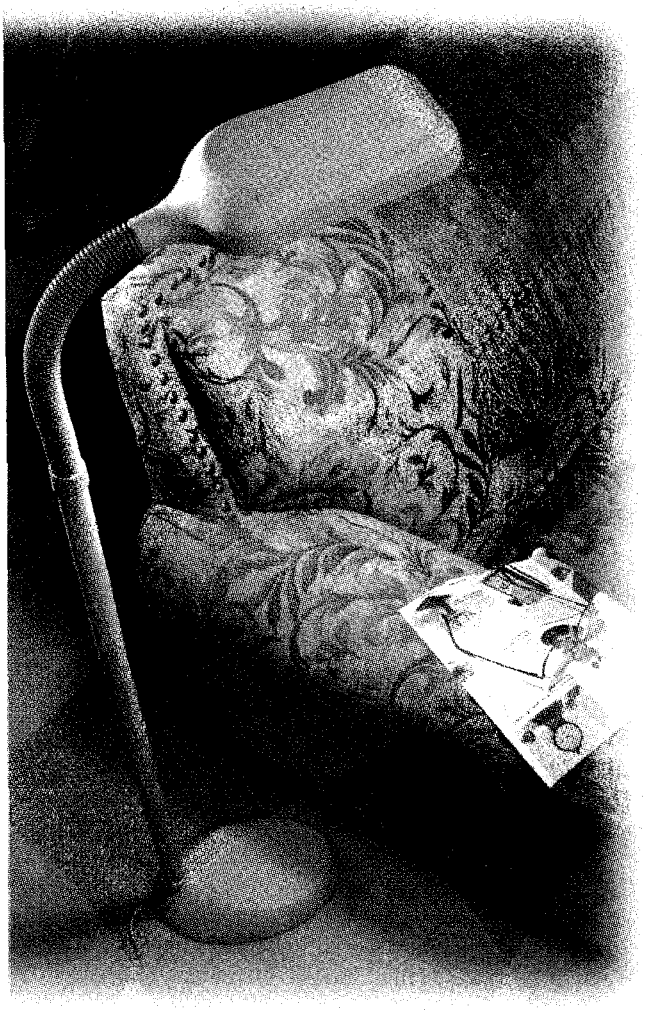

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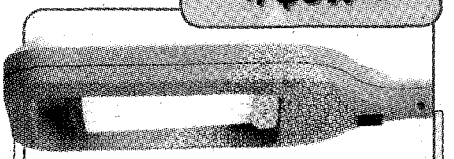

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of the four, but also (there's no delicate way to put this) the one that's explicitly anti-Jewish. Whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke write about a conspiracy of the "priests" and the "council," John writes about "the Jews," as if Jesus and the apostles had not belonged to this people. (Gibson reproduces the effect of John's rhetoric by a ready-to-hand visual device: He uses fine-featured actors, Mediterranean at most, as his good guys, while casting ostentatiously hook-nosed types as the heavies.) Gibson also makes the most of a statement in John that is not found in the synoptic Gospels, mitigating Pilate's guilt while emphasizing that of the High Priest: "He that delivered me unto thee," Jesus says to Pilate, "hath the greater sin."

No doubt Gibson would have made some people queasy simply by following this text; but he also would have been on relatively firm artistic ground. Let there be a cinematic *Passion According to St. John*. But Gibson went further. He introduced material from the synoptic Gospels into his main source—and these interpolations consistently exonerate Pilate and damn "the Jews." From Luke, Gibson takes the story of how Pilate hoped to let Jesus off with a flogging but then found this punishment would not satisfy the crowd. From Matthew comes a favorable mention of Pilate's wife, who calls Jesus a "just man" and urges her husband to avoid passing judgment. Gibson expands on both these elements, inventing for the first a concerned Roman soldier (who angrily orders an end to the flogging) and for the second providing a scene in which Pilate's wife befriends Mary and the Magdalene. Of course, the most widely discussed of the passages that Gibson has stitched into his narrative also comes from Matthew; it's the one in which "all the people" say, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Although this line goes untranslated in the current release print, it is howled on the soundtrack and can be subtitled at any time into the modern languages of Gibson's choice.

Admitting, though, that the film's pattern of selection is suspect, why shouldn't we respect Gibson's beliefs and just shut up about it? He has told everyone that *The Passion of the Christ* is about God's love; and he has in fact incorporated several key scriptural passages about forgiveness of sin and love for one's enemy. It might be reasonable for viewers to believe Gibson—except that the film's action speaks louder than its words.

The most telling event, for me, comes just after Jesus on the cross has asked God to forgive the High Priest. "He's praying for you!" cries the amazed criminal at Jesus's left hand, who requests and receives absolution. Not so the criminal to Jesus's right. He mocks the act of grace he's just witnessed and is immediately set upon by a raven, which plucks out both his eyes. Instant, bloody retribution! It's not scriptural, but it's what Gibson wants, and what he expects the audience to want, too.

Gibson and his apologists will retort that the divine sacrifice of the crucifixion makes the issue of blame irrelevant. This rebuttal may be theologically sound, but it ignores the historical record and (when applied to this film) denies the evidence on screen. In structure, style and dramatic import, *The Passion of the Christ* is all about identifying and punishing unbelievers, a category that is defined, by today's absolutists, to include many, many people beyond "the Jews."

Now for the good news. Quite a few Christians have understood Gibson's project and are deeply troubled by it. They have not been silent; whereas I, having fulfilled my obligation to address the movie of the year, will say no more—except to thank the people of good will, of many denominations, who have recognized this picture for what it is: a blunt instrument in an angry hand.

Short Takes: What a relief it is to withdraw from the culture wars and return to a life of normal movies, like *Starsky & Hutch*! Heaven knows, this latest recycling of 1970s TV is no masterpiece. (Movies seldom are, when they credit four writers.) The plot meanders, the jokes wheeze and Todd Phillips's direction—let's be positive—keeps most of the picture in focus, most of the time. On the other hand, Ben Stiller is fun, as usual, playing Starsky, a cop who is bristly even before the scene where he inadvertently swallows cocaine; Owen Wilson is charming, as usual, playing Hutch, another of the underachieving buddy-pic roles that Wilson redeems by underachieving in them; and Snoop Dogg is his own sly self as Huggy Bear, the sidekick-informant who helps contribute to the PG-13 rating (for "drug content, sexual situations, partial nudity, language and some violence," thank you very much). I smiled frequently; I laughed out loud two or three times; and I marveled to see that *Starsky & Hutch* is more faithful to its source than is *The Passion of the Christ*. You could find worse occasions for eating popcorn.

As for films that can be praised with no faintness: I've been savoring a tartly funny

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fable by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz, *James's Journey to Jerusalem*, which is beginning its US theatrical run with a showing at Film Forum in New York. A parable of sorts, which contrasts people's dreams of the Holy Land with the realities of the State of Israel, *James* is the story of a young Zulu farmer (the wonderfully open-faced Siyabonga Melongisi Shibe) who is in training to be his village's next pastor and undertakes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He gets as far as Ben Gurion airport. An immigration officer decides he's come as an undocumented worker and has him thrown in jail, from which he emerges only because a labor contractor (Salim Daw) plucks him out as fresh manpower. Now James really is an undocumented worker, living among other passport-free Africans in a Tel Aviv flophouse and doing grunt work for a succession of Israelis, so he can pay off a large nonexistent debt. Why did I enjoy this film so much? Because it shows a side of Israel that is rarely filmed; because James maintains his innocent faith, even after he is no longer so innocent; and because the line between catastrophe and opportunity turns out to be fuzzier than James might have imagined.

Since we're in the region, let me also recommend Nir Bergman's *Broken Wings*: a beautifully acted family drama set in Haifa, about people who either can't pick themselves up to do anything or else want to jump from high places. At the heart of the group is Maya (Maya Maron), a sharp-eyed and stringy 17-year-old with a talent for songwriting and an impossible burden of guilt. I think of her as an Israeli counterpart to the teenage heroine of Edward Yang's *Yi Yi*; and though *Broken Wings* (like just about everything else) lacks the exquisite mastery of Yang's film, its endless ability to create wonder within a kitchen-sink genre, I found the heroine and story of *Broken Wings* unexpectedly touching. A fine debut, for both Bergman and Maya Maron.

Screening Schedule: Last year I had the honor of being a guest at the sixth annual Green Mountain Film Festival, held on all two blocks of downtown Montpelier, Vermont. There I discovered a cinephile's utopia: a festival organized and supported by an entire community of local moviegoers. My hosts proved to me that the era of shared enjoyment and discussion is not over—and so, in gratitude, I join them in announcing that the seventh Green Mountain Film Festival will take place March 19–28. For information, go to www.savoytheater.com. ■

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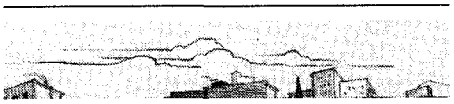

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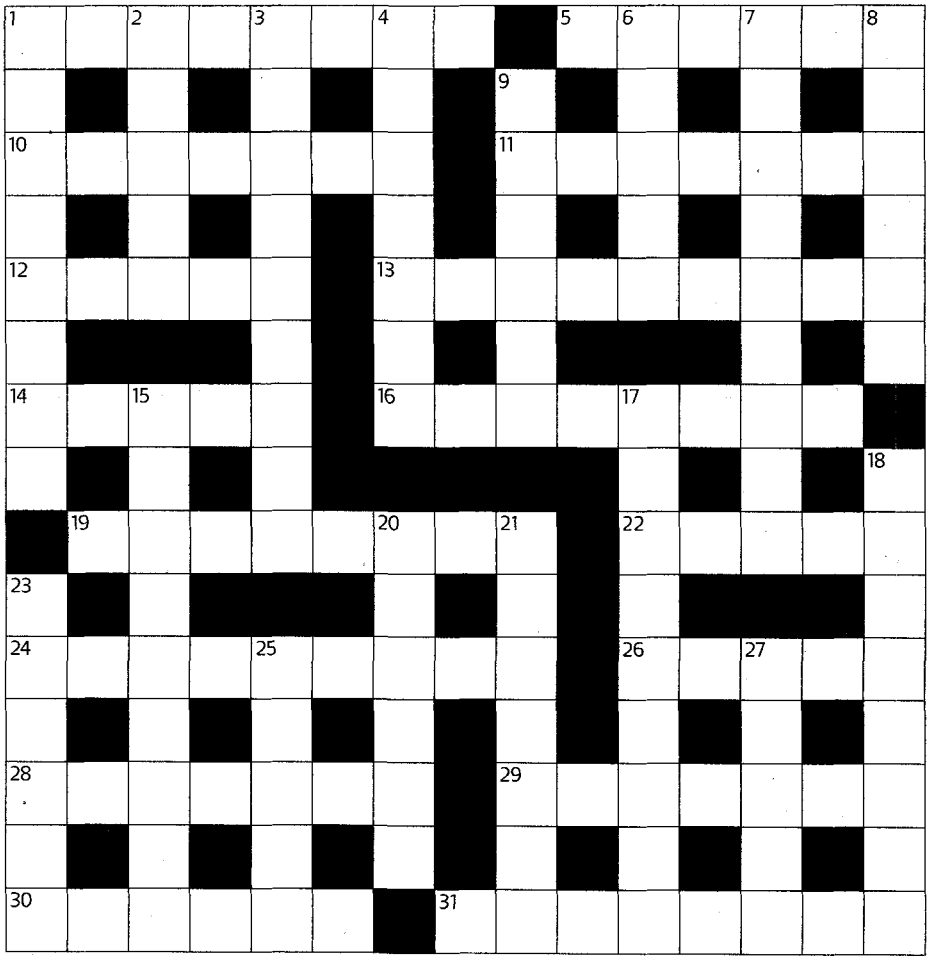

ACROSS

1 What the self-interested prisoner hopes to indulge in makes the imp's case difficult. (8)

5 and **25** down Implies things placed at the end of digits (which require a lot of polish for some) are comparatively solid. (4,2,5)

10 To heck with the expense, if you do! (It seems to offer a sort of plus to a regular start, perhaps.) (7)

11 One of the things people might put in the garage is seed! (7)

12 Perhaps a hundred also could be unnecessarily carried to 13. (5)

13 Not the same old place for such as King Arthur, being located in several countries. (9)

14 and **16** Get on your horse and hurry to a greater degree where someone made faces, as you should remember. (5,8)

19 Mars goes crazy when you get something so light. (8)

22 Perhaps a canal mule looks like part of the end of 13. (5)

24 Quaker typically, or like a writer with a page out of his book. (5,4)

26 It's certainly not a good thing that happens at the end of every day. (5)

28 They're supposedly strict at such a school, where one sees the old Hindu god. (7)

29 The losers of the Civil War in a sense, finding shelter here. (3,4)

30 Certainly not the new set reorganized to be ultimately like Methuselah. (6)

31 Voyages such as Ulysses made. (8)

DOWN

1 and **23** It's a cinch to move toward us and return with a few words for the unconcerned spender. (4,4,4,2)

2 Give a ring to a girl named like Lily? (5)

3 Located in Brazil, places where you find many hangers-on. (9)

4 Further back in the boat, being more severely described. (7)

6 A rota, perhaps, which is followed by the very thing that your heart keeps moving. (5)

7 An overturning of authority that's the fault of no one. (9)

8 The fashions of a piggish place to the French? (6)

9 Grimaces at the little science given to supposedly the wisest ones. (6)

15 No one seems to be running against one that is, but the world body has a little work finding what the question may be. (9)

17 Bounty evidently wasn't good enough for some of them, but mine's true-false. (9)

18 Wastes time making things like pancakes? (8)

20 A raging woman like Ms. West, and rather crazy! (6)

21 Lots taken when the British Air Force ran away! (7)

23 See 1

25 See 5 across

27 Hold a major point tightly, but register a complaint! (5)

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E	X	A	C	T	■	P	U	T	U	P	J	O	B	S
N	■	T	■	E	■	A	■	A	■	E	■	N	■	T
C	O	H	O	R	T	S	■	B	R	A	S	S	I	E
H	■	E	■	E	■	S	■	L	■	C	■	■	■	G
■	S	T	E	R	N	E	■	E	C	H	O	I	N	G
D	■	I	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	S
R	E	C	O	V	E	R	■	P	O	P	P	E	D	■
E	■	■	■	I	■	A	■	H	■	I	■	F	■	Z
S	A	M	O	V	A	R	■	O	K	E	E	F	F	E
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